

Reconceptualising quality through
pedagogical documentation
in early years education in South Africa.

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Note to the reader

Navigating and re-creating research writing

I invite readers to an interest in re-conceptualise-ing quality through pedagogical documentation in early years education in South Africa. I have written this dissertation in an unconventional manner taking up the responsibility of re-imagining research in the chapters ahead. I am deliberate about approaching this research project differently and it has felt necessary but not necessarily easy. I am caught up in Donna Haraway's contribution that "it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties" (Haraway 2016:12). In order for me to re-pond to this in my writing I have to welcome re-imagining and the troubling of the linear framework of writing a thesis. I have to refuse a pre-determined structure that research, theory, relationality and response-ability has to be moulded into. Queer Theorist Karen Barad (2014) explains re-turning as a "multiplicity of processes, such as the kinds earthworms revel in while helping to make compost or otherwise being busy at work and at play", an imagery of the soil being turned over and over with it being ingested and excreted (Barad 2014:168). This is a lively affair of an earthworm "tunnelling through it, burrowing, all means of aerating the soil, allowing oxygen in, opening it up and breathing new life into it" (Barad 2014:168).

Resisting has been continuous and continuously significant for the outcome of this way of writing. Haraway (2016) warns that replacing traditional research practices presents the risk of creating a different but also a fixed approach to research. An alternative is the "natural, social and political devastations" of the "doing" of research as part of her concept of "staying with the trouble" as an action (Haraway 2016; Sohldju 2017). I find connections in Donna Haraway's thought that we have to decompose, compose, redo and that the job for those of us who are serious about resisting definitive and fixed patterns is to inhabit the contact zones (Haraway 2016:12). These contact zones for me are the places where children, educators, education, practice, materiality, communities, encounters and what counts as quality, is part of an ongoing force of re-defining. The patterns and inheritances that exist in our schools, our ideas about

children and learning, is with us whether we believe in them or not. The pleasure of a collective thinking and of re-shaping new ways of re-imagining early years education begins when we are available to discovering other territories beyond the borders of expectancy. I have especially been swayed by Donna Haraway's conviction that there is something about our everyday engagements with other kinds of creatures that opens new kinds of possibilities for relating and understanding. Working in a school, lecturing at a university, being a student, a parent of school-going-children, simultaneously, and being a part of the damaged planet, is woven into my thoughts, affects my body, the inclusions, the exclusions, alternatives and general considerations about research and education in South Africa. I embrace the knowledge and uncertain certainty that when I re-turn to this research again, I would notice differently.

Exploring with a map

There are great consequences of working in this way; for those who read or step closer there is a possibility of unresolved and unsettling outcomes. I am aware of this and acknowledge that at times I, too, feel better about reading and finding conclusions, solutions and endings. This is not one of those writing pieces. I resist the comfort and feel the importance of staying with the trouble.

I write this dissertation with the children, the human and more-than-human others that participated with me in a dance of co-researching, co-constructing and co-witnessing. In an honouring way of their permission to be affected and affect, I mix theoretical writings with ideas, created data in a melody for what was present, possible and becoming. I take up this process as a curious and serious matter concerning injustice in early years research. Karen Barad proposes a "justice-to-come" (Barad 2012:81). She explains that justice is about "proceeding responsibly", which takes up the unreachable goal of allowing the response of the "in-between" she says she is trying to gesture toward. Barad (2012:81) adds that:

Doing justice is a profound yearning, a crucially important if inevitably unachievable activity, an always already inadequate attempt to respond to the ethical cry of the world.) Or, rather, perhaps I can put it this way: It is the very question of justice-to-come, not the search for a final answer

or final solution to that question, that motivates me. The point is to live the questions and to help them flourish.

For Murriss and Muller (2018:154) this is a decolonising move which is “not about truths about a just future” which if applied to my research project means that I am not handing out conclusions. My hope is that readers recognise their participation and discover, wonder, and consider relating differently and that they recognise the potential to marvel at something that I, the co-author, had not even suggested or planned for. A new form of decolonising research sets an urgency of political action which affects my writing. It is remarkable how uncomfortable and uncertain I have felt about how I included and excluded words, photographs, thoughts and entanglements. I have taken up the response-ability of the multiplicity of connections and suggestions for this project. My awareness is related to a significant belief in re-search being ongoing and open. A purposeful approach of doing-with and being-with keeps me questioning and marvelling at other potentialities for early years education.

It is important for the work of early childhood education that this re-storying of this research provokes us to think “anew and to resist normalized and habitual conceptions of childhood, education, learning, and assessment” (Berger 2010:58). I build on Berger’s (2010) view and situate this research in the space of political action through pedagogical narration which “presents an unprecedented opportunity for early childhood educators (as well as citizens) to deepen and broaden meanings associated with early learning and to explore alternative discourses of early childhood education” (Berger 2010:58).

I immerse myself in a complex working of broadening meanings and denying defining what it means to participate in research spaces. With Pacini-Ketchabaw (2010) I present differences, perspectives and theoretical standpoints in paying attention to early years education and look more closely at relationships rather than predictions. Re-storying through following theory, bending theory and transforming theory, I situate this work in an intra-activity of theory and practice (Lenz Taguchi 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010). I cannot fully articulate my role as a co-researcher because I do not participate with one role because the relationships and relationality re-positions me. This project becomes a continuous unfolding of new boundaries

and territories being discovered through pedagogical documentation, the curriculum, children, materials, researcher and teacher - all being affected in a web of early years education. Integrating narratives, questions, opportunities and entanglements complicate the lines of connections. This happens when we respond in multiple ways to encounter practice and theory in early years education in South Africa.

Always follow the rhizome by rupture; lengthen, prolong, and relay the line of flight; make it vary, until you have...broken directions. Conjugate deterritorialized flows.

(Deleuze and Guattari 1987:11)

For readers to respond to the possibilities that emerge rhizomatically, I believe that this style of writing requires a kind of map, without representing.



Fig 1. Re-searching map



I insert a QR code as an opportunity to share diffractive encounters with readers. According to Karen Barad (2014), diffraction is not an optical metaphor; but “a method and a practice that pays attention to material engagement with data” (Bozalek & Zembylas 2018:47). Diffraction for Barad and Haraway is a “process of being attentive to how differences get made and what the effects of these differences are” (Bozalek & Zembylas 2018:47). A QR code augments reality and

takes the flattened forms on paper into a 3D entanglement with the sound of rustling paper, the movement, materiality and embodied footage. From Barad’s (2014) perspective the effects of these differences and the ongoing process is where meaning is co-constructed. In the creation of this map, there is a non-identifiable pattern formed with scissors, ribbon, paper, ink, ideas,

fingers, sounds, thoughts, eyes, textures, table, sensations, affect and so much more which cannot fully be included in a photograph, audio or other form. I am caught in a rhizomatic pattern where starting and ending points are not of importance but process is ongoing and has potential for more narratives. The significance of the un-traceable pattern is where I see resonances with Haraway's relational ontology. The relationship inbetween my ideas, the created map, materials and recordings, is brought forward in an entangled pattern knotted in places with possibilities for more ideas and narratives about early childhood education. According to Barad, oral storytelling and retelling encourages productions of "new, recycled, and modified narrative meanings rather than one unifying unchanging history" (Barad 2014:182). In the stories *with-in* these modified narratives this project opens up spaces for further connections.

I am not interested in reconciliation or restoration, but I am deeply committed to the more modest possibilities of partial recuperation and getting on together.

Call that staying with the trouble.

Donna Haraway

Staying with the trouble (2016:10)

Introduction

Children in South Africa are entangled in legacies of Western philosophical constructions of being (ontology) and knowing (epistemology) and positioned according to the dominant discourses of the society of which they are a part. It is of concern that in the South African education system, curriculum and classroom environments, children's learning is measured, observed and assessed by pre-determined and fixed westernised performance markers particularly through documentation and the notion of quality. I investigate how children are unjustly positioned through what counts as quality in the documenting processes in the early years in South African schools.



Fig 2. Theories and constructions

I explore this issue in my dissertation and in particular I enquire how pedagogical documentation in the context of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) can shift children from being otherised. Through this project I seek more just ways of repositioning children as co-constructors of theories, thoughts and ideas through the practices of pedagogical documentation. In particular, I investigate how, through a re-conceptualising of the concept quality, pedagogical documentation can be used as a tool for the one hundred and a hundred more ways that children learn and relate to human and more-than-human others. In the earlier stages of research I was particularly focussed on children a significant tracing and intensity occurred when the theory and data creation connected (Fig. 2). I find myself in the messy politics of human exceptionalism in education. A clear theme emerges of education focussing either on child-centred learning or teacher-centred learning. The reason for this struggle stems from a

pursuit of “child-centred pedagogies and addressing the developmental needs of the (becoming autonomous) individual child within the child’s (exclusively human) sociocultural context” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Taylor & Blaise 2015:2). As I navigate through the theory about early years education, I become increasingly curious about posthuman theory and its ideas about relationality. In a quest to show more just pedagogical practices with children, I am at risk of positioning the child as the focus of early years education. Because of the influences of my own learning experiences in South African schools, as well as my career as a professional teacher, I find myself entangled in my own practice and theories of early childhood. As I write about early years education in Chapter One, a new rhythm grabs hold of me about entanglements with human and more-than human others and disrupts practices of centering the child. Moving away from this familiar practice is hard work and political but also generative and radical. I join the growing body of critical early childhood researchers who are interested in re-imagining childhood and pedagogy beyond developmental theory and practice (Dahlberg & Moss 2013; Lenz Taguchi 2014; Murris 2016; Ohlsson 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010; Taylor, 2013) and re-conceptualising pedagogical practices which acts as a rupture for normalised understandings of early childhood education (Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010; Taylor 2015).

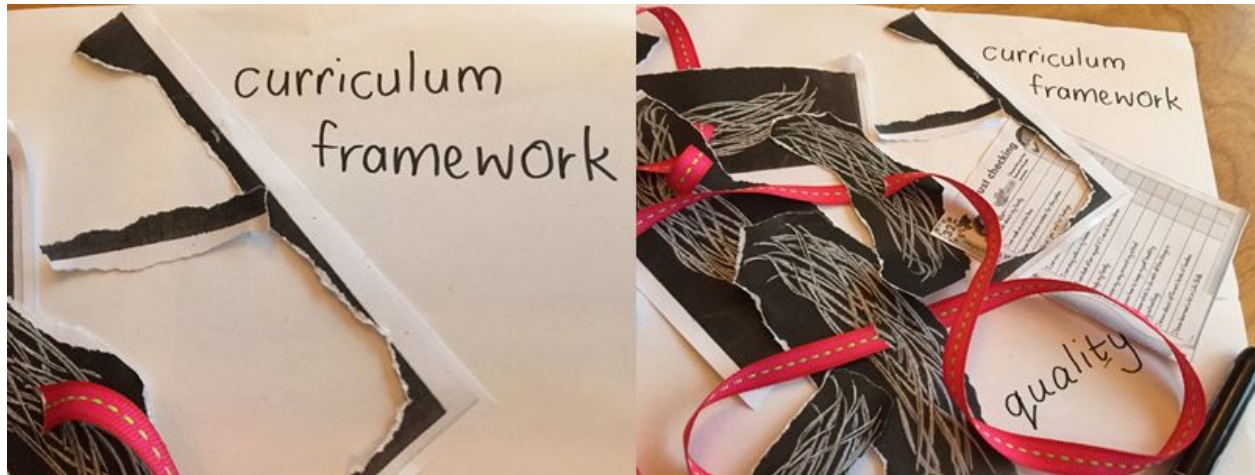


Fig 3. Curriculum framings

After the fall of Apartheid in South Africa, political decisions created newer ways of positioning teachers, children and the curriculum in schools. In particular, the pressure for difference in the curriculum design resulted in the state considering a quality education model which could

compete with so-called universal views of quality education. In the foreword of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), Angie Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education, stated that the “national curriculum is the culmination of our efforts over a period of seventeen years to transform the curriculum bequeathed to us by apartheid” (National Curriculum Statement, Department of Basic Education 2011). Motshekga goes on to say that education and the curriculum play an important role in the realisation of the aims of the constitution. One of the general aims of the curriculum is to provide “an education that is comparable in quality” to that of “other countries” (2011:5).

I investigate how these ideas and power work within the early years setting. How does the curriculum work with children, teachers, learning and knowledges? I am specifically interested in the influences of a different understanding of quality within early years education through problematising ‘universal’ definitions or understandings of what counts as quality. Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo, Kocher, Elliot and Sanchez’s (2015) explanation of reconceptualisation resonates with my interests as I explore how we should not only think about early childhood education in a new way but more importantly question the singular or universal truths about early years education and its relationship to notions of quality. Reconceptualisation understands the significance of the re-thinking of early childhood education, practices and underlying assumptions (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo, Kocher, Elliot. & Sanchez 2015). Critiquing words like *best practice* and *quality education* brings into question the influences and theories that limit re-imagining new understandings about early childhood education in South Africa. I write this thesis as a response to these concerns and seek newer ways of re-conceptualising quality.

In discussing meeting places of theory and practice, I grapple with continued contributions and embodied uncertainties which throw up questions. I find myself a part of an assembling together of images of child, pedagogical documentation, relationality and quality which this research project disrupts. It attempts to make alternative narratives visible. Although there are clear questions which emerge, I become increasingly sensitive to the way that re-search questioning is always in motion. In line with the common world framework (Common Worlds Research Collective, 2015) I am pushed beyond the limits of intelligibility within the field of early

childhood education, where we are situated” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Taylor & Blaise 2015:2) and find myself in a place where multiple questions are raised.

How do questions work?

Negotiating with how questions work, change, why they do so and why they keep changing I include my initial questions and present questions in this section. The nature of knowledge as a web makes for re-thinking questioning with-in its relationship with knowledge. Fissures and cracks exist in questions as articulations of the start of finding answers. By this I mean that questions can be designed and situated in a position of power as they are constructed for a singular and definitive answer. Many educators, myself included, are trained to ask questions for which we have already designed a preferred or singular answer. I use this memory of change as a reminder of how research can be problematic if it is only created for finding an answer to a question. This powerful dance of openness and intention can work as a power producing pattern to early years research or another oppressive pattern that is positioned over early years research.

I take seriously the responsibility of questions and their relationship narratives. In keeping with the thinking of Despret (Buchanan, Chrulew & Bussolini 2015), I am sensitive to the importance of unpredictability in the path of storytelling. It is because of this that I consider how my questions work as influences in my interests and data created. I acknowledge that I am in an entangled connection to my research questions as they participate with me in this research project. I am explicit in my quest to re-turn to the questions, modify them and re-think how they influence me. I resist the urge to resolve questions.

I do not ask questions as a form of critique. Braidotti's (2012:6) challenge is that there is an "intimate connection between critique and creation". I use this intimacy in the hope of alternative considerations. Therefore, instead of seeking answers I shift to an intentional recognition that these research questions are in continuous motion. This movement happens between discoveries, de-composing and re-turning to the data created in this project, not for an answer but for opportunities to complicate, immerse and resist normativity. Simply put, I find myself playing with the complications of committing to multiple responses, suggestions and possibilities as answers to my re-search questions. Within the bounded frame of a prescriptive dissertation I acknowledge the limitations of words, structure and design. I am also settled in the dis-comfort that I am only able to play a part in the un-tangling and re-tangling of the themes which I

explore. I have left many of the thoughts, notes, scribbles and squiggles undocumented in this version but acknowledge its part in the un-folding. They have knotted and storied to reveal these questions that are now continually re-threading and un-threading patterns which resonates as more-than a work for answers.

Research question

How does pedagogical documentation shift how the concept of quality works in the early years education in South Africa?

The questions below are my original subquestions with evidence of the messiness of thoughts and tensions.

Original Subquestions

1. What is the **relationship** between human and the more-than-human in pedagogical documentation?
2. In what way does reconfiguring quality in education influence what counts as **meaning-making**?
3. How does pedagogical documentation through ‘modest witnessing’ open up spaces for **collaborative** *knowledge construction*?
4. How can pedagogical documentation **work** in the context of the CAPS curriculum?

These are the present research subquestions which I re-turn to throughout my writing:

Present Subquestions

1. What theories about the image of the child influence early years education in South Africa?
2. How does 'modest witnessing' open up spaces for new ways of noticing relationality?
3. How can pedagogical documentation work as a practice create alternatives for more ethical relatings?
4. What is possible in a relationship between pedagogical documentation and CAPS Life Skills curriculum in re-conceptualise-ing quality?

Considering all this, what can be added to the theoretical and academic debate about early years education in South Africa?

Keywords: documentation, relationality, Reggio Emilia, curriculum, pedagogical documentation, quality

Chapter One

Early years education in South Africa

The image of child requires attention in early childhood education. Children have been positioned according to dominant theories which describe them as underdeveloped, in need of construction or even lacking socialisation (Murriss 2016). The assessment of children in schools is based on a developmental, stage-like and linear approach to what is considered as quality education. Documentation like workbooks, worksheets, written assessments and observation sheets are commonly used to assess children's knowledge. A growing number of scholars in early childhood education (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2006; Lenz Taguchi 2010; Murriss 2016; Nxumalo 2016; Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010; Taylor 2012) argue that when we pay close attention to how child is positioned in these practices, an oppressive and unjust way of working with children is noticeable.



Fig 4. Being and knowing

What does being and knowing look like in a South African classroom? The influences of constructed ways of working with children seemed challenged in these images (Fig. 4). The continuous movement of teachers, children, material and the environment in multiple ways and in the space produce further possibilities for what is being and knowing.

When referring to learning in the early years, Lenz Taguchi (2010:62) warns against the injustice

of measuring learning through assessment of what currently counts as quality education. Through measurement as the form of assessment, educators limit other discourses through the aims based on what is pre-determined quality, further limiting other ways of knowledge being produced, constructed and evaluated. In Chapter Four, I address the importance of contesting and critiquing this construct of quality, as it contributes to the political and ethical considerations of what counts as valuable knowledge (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2006:38) and leads to what Murriss (2016:137) calls “ontoepistemic injustice”.

This injustice is committed against a child when s/he is taken less seriously, because s/he is identified ontologically as a *child* (identity prejudice), rather than an adult, therefore when child speaks she is listened to differently – what Miranda Fricker (in Murriss 2016:135-137) calls “testimonial injustice”. Moreover, over time, being a victim of testimonial injustice over time leads to “hermeneutical injustice”, that is, when child starts to lack confidence in her ability of making sense of social experiences and being a knower (Fricker, in Murriss 2016:135). These discriminatory practices position children outside of the knowing processes and excludes them from being regarded as participants in the co-construction of new knowledges. Ontoepistemic injustice uses the lens of looking at the social and material experience obscured from collective understanding. In other words, power relations between adult and child disempower someone/thing in relation to another. An example of this in the classroom would be when the adult is considered the expert and a child the novice. Drawing on the work of Karen Barad, Lenz Taguchi (2014:82) proposes a radical shift in what counts as the knowing subject; the posthuman subject is always ‘becoming’: “becoming-with constitutes an ontological turn in that it questions the notion of being, the given stable, detached subject of a specific identity with distinct borders in relation to other beings of identity.” This shift in subjectivity from the individual to the relationality ‘inbetween’ individuals (human and more-than-human bodies) has profound implications for what counts as knowledge, learning and teaching. Educators in South Africa, are still led by the more human-centred discourses of power and quality. They are influenced by unjust views of a child and measures of performance in a curriculum.



Fig 5. Planning and paper

The planning and preparation of teachers in South African schools are required to be available to the Department school is kept in a file, stuck on the wall and includes a file with the CAPS document. The curriculum has set outcomes and pre-determined markers for children to meet before being considered ready for Grade 1 (Fig. 5).

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2008) suggest that through normalising the ways children should respond to a curriculum and measuring their responses accordingly, we are distracted from “finding out how they really are” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008:107). The discourse of development and quality are interested in generating forms of knowledge which are predetermined. Even more concerning is the way that these measures work as assessments for ticking off or estimations of understandings. Instead of redesigning these systems we should rather be paying attention to the multiple perspectives (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008). A re(figure)ing that brings into view “explicitly ethical and philosophical choices, judgments of value, made in relation to the wider questions of what we want for our children here and now” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008:107). Identifying the need for shifts from a logic that excludes children as co-participants and compels us to consider what counts as quality education.



Fig. 6 Reaching

In Figure 6 water is poured on the table, stones in a bowl, water and bark in a cup, hands reaching and an acorn is visible with my eyes as a researcher. Thinking with Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2008) I wonder about judgements and wider questions about what else is taking place beyond the logic of what is seen with the human eye. Barad (2007) contributes to this by bringing into question the reliability and ethics of using physical optics as a measure to decide what exists.

Loris Malaguzzi is known as one of the leaders in pedagogical thinking in the 20th century. The Reggio Emilia approach to education founded by Malaguzzi disrupts the patterns of curriculum and documentation by problematising the limited narrative of who a child is in relation to education. The Reggio Emilia philosophy and approach to education was born out of the Second World War. Although Malaguzzi founded the first municipal school in the small town of Reggio Emilia in 1963, the first school actually started in 1947. This is significant as the initial work and involvement of women, farmers and community in questioning the politics of education became fundamental to the pedagogical practice and in what took place before the first municipal school opened (Rinaldi 2010). The constant provoking of the ethical implications of dominant education discourses and pushing for “a means for democratic participation in the discussion and

evaluation of pedagogical practice” plays a key part in the history of the Reggio Emilia philosophy (Rinaldi 2010:9). I explore this issue in my dissertation and in particular aim to enquire how pedagogical documentation in the context of the Foundation Phase Life Skills CAPS curriculum can shift children from being otherised and how they can be repositioned as co-constructors of knowledges through the practices of ‘pedagogical documentation’ (see Chapter Three). In particular, I investigate how pedagogical documentation can be used to re-configure what counts as quality. In the first chapter of her book *The Posthuman Child*, Murris (2016:52) inspired by Karen Barad’s work, argues that “for relational ontologists, nature cannot be reduced to a mere subject of human knowledge”. Learning does not take place by means of transmission or reproduction with nature at a distance. According to Rinaldi (2010:9), the true act of co-construction is “in relation with others”.

The “others” to which Rinaldi (2010) refers, I read as the more-than-human. The more-than-human can be explained by listening to Loris Malaguzzi’s (1998) view on education as a relationship. Malaguzzi makes clear that for him the distinction is not between the human and the non-human but in relationships and also pays attention to include the more-than-human in teaching and learning, for example, the materiality of spaces of learning. Although many Reggio Emilia theorists emphasise the relational in education, they are still human-centred and focus on refiguring the image of the child. However, the practice can be theorised through posthumanism as a navigational tool (Lenz Taguchi 2010; Murris 2016). Some of these examples of relationality in a classroom would be the chairs, the carpet, the clothing, the class pet, the door, the view out of the window and the wind.



Fig. 7 Relationships and material

In Figure 7 I the materiality of the paper, cork, koki, box, carpet, table, clothing, child, children etc. being in relationship, not separate.

Developmental markers and stage like measures have become the influence of how we view learning and children within the education system, also in South Africa. Another influence on the view of children and knowledge construction is Foucault's (2002) notion of governmentality "as a lens dominant ways of teaching remain, despite political and curricular shifts" (Dixon 2013:275). Legislation means that children do not have a choice about whether they attend school. Schools have become places where children learn "values for functioning in society, as well as the knowledge and skills that are embedded in curricula" (Dixon 2013:275). Dahlberg and Moss (in Lenz Taguchi 2010) are critical of the developmentalist approach and the assumptions thereof by saying that it further contributes towards discourses that reduces the complexity of appropriate teaching practice. They argue that this creates assumptions that an 'essential' universal child exists, which is particularly relevant for the South African context. Transdisciplinary critique of developmental theory, according to Murris, can be summarised under the headings of "lack of methodological validity, a normative process, complexity reduction, preparation for the capitalist workforce, evolutionary bias and otherising child" (Murris 2016:79).

Liselott Mariett Olsson, in her book *Movement and Experimentation in Young Children's Learning* (2009), explains the discourse of developmental psychology as "one in which the child already has its position and predetermined development, and where learning is seen as a question of transmission and reproductive imitation" (Olsson 2009:7). Murris (2016) refers to the

figuration of the developing child through a series of neologisms. The first neologism ‘i’ she invented as a means to express how we see children as not fully human, therefore lacking or incomplete (a small ‘i’). Social constructivists like Lev Vygotsky have a different lens to the developmentalists. Murris (2016:115) explains that for social constructivists the acquisition of concepts needs to be mediated socially for a child to fully develop and mature. What is crucial for a social constructivist view of education is that these acquisitions occur between a knowledgeable other (a teacher) and a novice (a child). Murris (2016) goes on to express this as being the image of the child as ‘ii’ to disrupt the more individualistic ways of viewing the child. Lenz Taguchi (2010) adds that developmentalists have been supplemented by constructivists who focus on how learning takes place. The observations made through these views of children are to compare, reduce the differences and complexities among children to “bring them to a mastery of basic skills and to allow them to assimilate well into the school system” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:8; Murris 2016). Another proposed image of the child by Murris (2016) is the child as ‘I’. Murris (2016) draws on the United Nations Rights of the Child (UNESCO 1989) where children are described as a subject of rights. However, the concern here is with the individualistic nature of the child rather than a “mutually entangled and always becoming” (posthuman child), in other words a relational being ontologically speaking (Murris 2016:84; Barad 2007). Relationships bring the individual into existence.

Affrica Taylor (2013) recasts childhood as messy and implicated rather than pure and innocent. Like Murris (2016), Olsson (2009) and Lenz Taguchi (2010), Taylor disrupts the theories of child by rethinking childhood as not demarcated and foreclosed. She situates her view of child in entangled real world relations rather than a separate, individualised, decontextualised space. Against conventional thoughts, Taylor (2013) interrogates the relationship between nature and culture and purposefully politicizes and reconfigures it “as a lively and unforeclosed set of political and ethical affordances” (Taylor 2013:xiv). Considering all these contributions, what can be added to the theoretical and academic debate about early years education in South Africa?

Drawing on Foucault’s theory, Dixon (2013:277) explains that the state creates frameworks for “different power relations to operate.” In South Africa, apartheid was one of these frameworks. Through this framework of apartheid, new forms of knowledge and dominant discourses came

about because of the implementation of state power (Dixon 2013). All discourses have power to regulate children's bodies as they create boundaries and thereby include and exclude (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2006:38). These discourses powerfully act in ways that inform teachers and schools practice and the way in which they work with children. The discourse of 'good quality' education which is a commonly used concept in South African schools directly impacts the "deficit constructions" of children and leads to further measurement, comparisons and the use of instruments to assess school readiness and evaluation based on developmental norms (Nxumalo 2016:1).



Fig. 8 Standing girl

How are discourses working to regulate the way that a child is able to respond? As mentioned previously, children's bodies can form part of the boundaries that are created. Many activities and use of furniture can limit children's bodies and create boundaries for ways of working with children. Standing at a table and working is uncommon in an early childhood classroom in South Africa unlike what is seen in Figure 8. It is noticed how the chairs are in the background moved out of the table space and onto the carpet which is mainly used for sitting on.

According to Foucault, "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (1980:100). These forms of power shape, regulate and normalise subjects like Mathematics, Life Skills and Literacy, which explains why discourses make it difficult for educators and schools to

embrace alternative practices. Discourse systems regulate groups like school communities and designs a practice that imposes a “desire to be normal” (Canella & Viruru 2004:47). Educators then construct standards which are used to measure or judge themselves as well as the children. An example of this work of discourse and power is ‘best practice’ which includes ideas in which good quality teachers can be described as professional, well trained, productive and producing good results. Lenz Taguchi adds that the influence of developmental theorists and evaluations “build on ideas about what constitutes best practice, and best practices are defined in terms of standardised criteria related to developmental learning theories” (2010:25) that position children (using Murriss’ neologisms) as i, I or ii.

Discourse of quality become even more influential in schools when standardisation and universal measures are applied. A postmodernist (as opposed to a posthumanist) perspective declares that there is no child or one childhood, but many childhoods, that cannot be *discovered* but rather are socially and culturally constructed which then in turn informs how early childhood institutions are created (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008:43). These discourses have placed the world at a distance rather than positioning the child as already part of the world. Language discourses and material-discursive practices, for example, work powerfully to influence how children understand themselves in relation to the world (Murriss 2016).

Rinaldi (2010:64), when referring to the Reggio Emilia approach to education, identifies the importance of acknowledging relational qualities whereby the person (teacher, child or parent) and the environment (which includes the more-than-human) are in a reciprocal connectedness. Lenz Taguchi (2010:49-50) argues that “the consequences for educational practice of such thinking are for teachers to make themselves much more aware of, as well as find ways to make use of, the complexities, differences and diversities of the material-discursive contexts we inhabit”. This makes me wonder about the limitations of a fixed and definitive notion of what ‘best practice’ is. What would be afforded to education if we would see a continuous relational practice?

The South African Constitution, 1996, states in section 29 of the Bill of Rights among others that: “Everyone has the right to a basic education”. In South Africa, we have experienced a

variation of educational approaches which has been linked to our political history. According to Dixon (2013:276), we are currently dealing with the tension of “old dominant ways of being” and of “managing (governing) children” as well as the possibilities of “what education might become”. Many teachers, according to Dixon (2013), have been exposed to the notion of child-centred teaching and an outcomes-based model which was implemented in the 1990’s. Years after, Dixon (2013) draws on the findings of the Human Sciences Research Council and Education Policy Consortium (2005) that many SA classrooms are still mostly applying rote learning, design teacher-centred lessons and only superficially engage with knowledge. Teachers in South Africa have been part of child or teacher centeredness since the fall of Apartheid.

According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) of South Africa, White Paper 5 (2001:9), “Early childhood development refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child’s rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential”. Murris (2016) suggests that developmental theory discourses assume that children need protection and are immature and still developing, and she refers to this image of the child as ‘i’ (Murris 2016). Developmental psychology has been part of the legacy of South African education goals and focus. This theory is formed around the idea that children develop in the categories of cognitive, emotional and physical development and is necessary as it is designed according to milestones and readiness.

DBE White Paper 5 (2001:43) proposes that “Growing evidence from child development research [suggests] that the largest part of brain development happens before a child reaches three years old and that it is during this period that children develop their abilities to think and speak, learn and reason and lay the foundation for their values and social behaviour as adults.” This view is based on the developmental theory lens and furthermore on the constructivists view of child and childhood and suggest that brain development and thinking is one and the same in their maturation. Lenz Taguchi (2010) and posthumanists perspectives looks towards a pedagogy and practice in early childhood education that searches for a transdisciplinary approach that includes possibilities of educational experiences rather than limiting early childhood to a predetermined process to complete like language acquisition, values to be attained and social

behaviour as mentioned in DBE White Paper 5 (2001). This takes place through relationality and intra-actions which I clarify further on in this chapter. The government's solutions to the current educational 'crisis' (very low scores on international benchmark tests in mathematics and literacy) was to introduce a new revised national curriculum: The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS].

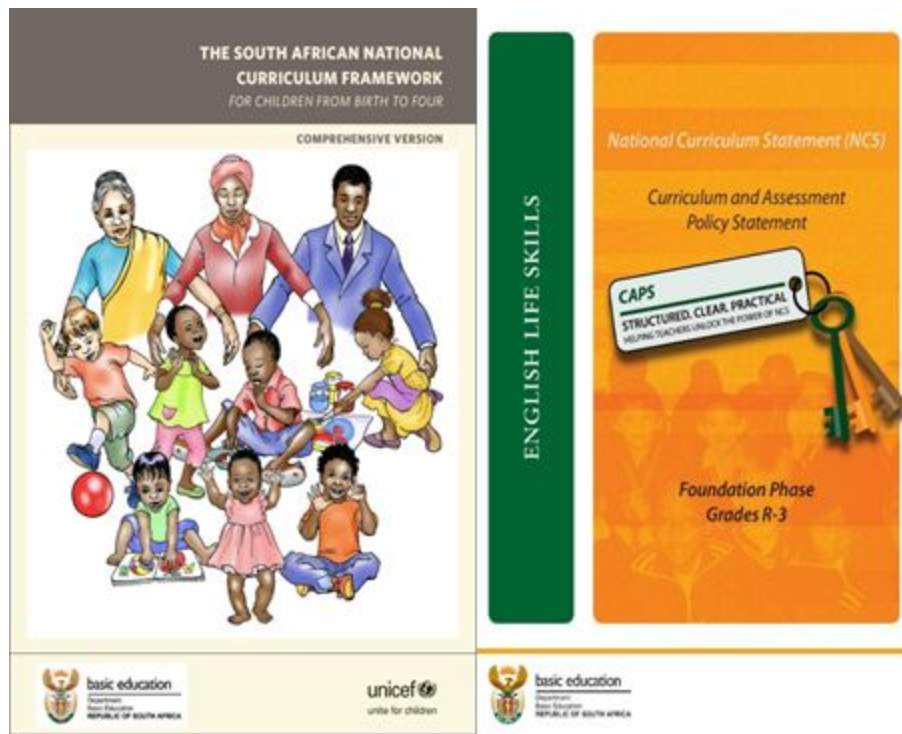


Fig. 9 Curriculum and content

Figure 9 is the cover of the National Curriculum Framework and the Foundation Phase Life Skills CAPS in South Africa. Both of these documents are what educators in early childhood schools are working from.

According to Rinaldi (2010:103), the word 'curriculum' is a political one as it goes together with curriculum planning and lesson planning which does not work in favour of "representing the multiple strategies that are necessary for sustaining children's knowledge-building processes". Unfortunately, the term curriculum has political overtones, emphasizing content and lesson planning, rather than reflecting the complexities required to ensure we sustain children's knowledge in the process of curriculum design (Rinaldi, 2010:103).

For many teachers, CAPS brings with it a pressure to work with standardised national workbooks in combination with and including highly prescribed, specified, sequenced and paced outcomes. This pressure is not necessarily based on the curriculum goals itself, which I address in Chapter Four. So where does this pressure stem from and what keeps it present in the public

schools? Teachers are measured through Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS), which consists of three programmes; Developmental Appraisal, Performance Measurement and Whole School Evaluation. It is noticed that many schools design and plan lessons, worksheets, and assessments which are paper based in an attempt to ensure that when evaluations and performance are assessed, teachers have all the necessary paperwork. Strict monitoring from the provincial department and paperwork administration makes the focus of teaching even more measurement based. Step 8 in the IQMS process is documentation which again is a key component of displaying successful teaching and delivery of quality teaching (DBE 2010; Murriss, Reynolds & Peers 2018). Teachers are required to report on children's performance through reports which are paper based as well as record quarterly performance in an online document for the department officials who visit the school, as well as for online scrutiny. This is a form of documenting that demonstrates performance and achievement.

Since literacy and mathematics performance is at its lowest, the Education Department has intensified their involvement in schools. However, this does not mean more support in practice but rather more requests for written reports and quarterly submissions of teachers' administration. With the pressure to produce good results, schools are called to strengthen the teaching of school subjects in mathematics and literacy and time allocation is geared specifically to these two subjects. As a result, Life Skills during Foundation Phase has the least time allocation and is positioned below literacy and mathematics. This, despite the fact that Life Skills focuses on the natural and social sciences, the creative arts and physical exercise (Murriss, Reynolds & Peers 2018). These three subjects are laid out as separate and are taught independently from one another according to the suggested timetable allocation marked out in CAPS. Blaise, Hamm and Iorio (2016) suggest that reading has been reduced "to a list of skills observed, including how fast or slow a child reads, if she can predict what will happen next, or if she self-corrects while reading a sentence. In addition, these traditional practices inscribe a particular kind of reasoning, and are grounded in a developmental logic" (Blaise, Hamm & Iorio 2016:3).

When considering the design of the Life Skills curriculum, what connections or considerations are made in the pattern of these topics? When covering concepts like homes, the focus is on

human homes and animal homes as separate topics. In the Foundation Phase Life Skills curriculum, children cover the topic of Our Homes as a human concept and then separate the concept of home for animals. This further separates humans and works as a boundary rather than enabling thinking about homes for more-than-humans. Very few schools, unlike the school I spent my time researching in, encourage interspecies relationships and relationships between the human and more-than-human.



Fig. 10 multi-species relationality

In Figure 10 learning, relationships, intra-actions and presence of multi-species is present inside and outside of the classrooms. We can find ourselves in the position of sentimentalizing the presence of animals by reducing the relationship to one that supports the human adult or child. In other words, it is common that people view animals as powerful only because of how they make child act, behave or respond. In some of these photographs I am aware of the possibility of it describing animals in

relation to the children but I suggest that something else is present. The relationality of human and more-than-human intra-action is affording the potential of rendering each other capable.



Fig. 11 CAPS topics

In Figure 11 CAPS approved posters (Grow Learning Company 2018) show a separation of human and animal homes. The planning in Term 2 Grade R for the topic Home is given two hours and the subheadings start with who and what. This questioning, I would suggest, is an example of questioning for an expected humanist answer.

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2013) highlight that the developmental view of early childhood research that informs curricula like the one in South Africa, seeks to construct the child according to “inherent and predetermined human nature revealed through process of

development and maturity and who can be described in terms of scientific concepts and classifications” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2013:48). Furthermore, this view creates boundaries between human ways of being part of the world. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2008:43) continue by arguing that early childhood education is constructed historically through a modernist view and more recently a postmodernist perspective. A modernist view could be understood to be the thinking behind the term child-centred which sees the child “as a unified, reified and essentialized subject—at the centre of the world—that can be viewed and treated apart from relationships and context” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008:43). How would this view contribute towards excluding relationships between the child, teacher and other species? Murris (2016) and all the Common World Collective contributors explain that developmental psychology, despite continuous academic critique, still holds a dominant place in early childhood practice. Murris (2016) warns that comparing the relationship between humans and education to nature metaphors, like an acorn becoming an oak tree (Fig. 12, an Aristotelian metaphor), creates conceptual confusion that the mind is understood to grow and develop like a physical body. It suggests that all children have one path for maturation only and does not take into account children’s situatedness, not only culturally, ethnically, and socially (as is the case with child as ‘ii’), but also ontologically and materially (child as ‘iii’), as in proximity to land and sea etc.

When considering the skills required in Life Skills, as determined by a developmental focus by the Department of Basic Education, it is clear that these are human or child-centred. What is to be assumed about the image of the child and childhood in relation to the world around them when we read these school ready aims? What are the limitations? How are children positioned in the world for which they are a part of? Schools are to provide pre-school aged children with:

- Opportunities to develop fine motor skills
- Encouragement of language through talking, being read to, singing
- Activities that will develop a sense of mastery
- Experimentation with pre-writing and pre-reading skills
- Hands-on exploration for learning through action
- Opportunities for taking responsibility and making choices
- Encouragement to develop self-control, cooperation and persistence in completing projects

- Support for their sense of self-worth
- Opportunities for self-expression
- Encouragement of creativity



Fig. 12 Acorn and oak tree

How then do we think differently if we accept Murris' (2016) offer that the relationship between a human and education is not as simple as the acorn developing into an oak tree? In Figure 12 what is made visible and possible beyond that which developmental theory suggests? The materials, the children, the adult are affecting each other in a motion of learning. Is it possible that that which we seek to see as measures of learning becomes a boundary for what else is happening? Besides pencil grip, posture, sharing and above mentioned 'provisions' what alternative patterns are emerging?

Relationality in early years education

Taylor and Giugni (2012) emphasise the deliberate use of 'relationality' instead of 'relationship' (Haraway 2008) in the same way as Murris (2016) refers to child as iii. They argue that relationship often assumes two subjects (as in 'interaction') whereas relationality can include the more-than-human (as in 'intra-action') and acknowledges that this can create mutual transformation. This points to the subject or object coming into existence through relationality. Lenz Taguchi (2010:43) proposes that discourses are intertwined and intra-acting "with the agency of all other bodies, materials and artefacts in the world, with no clear-cut boundaries

between them”. An intra-active pedagogy frames the implications of a material-discursive practice in documenting traces of entanglements in the classroom. Murris (2016) argues that intra-action offers profound implications for teaching and research. She explains that intra-activity and relationality make it “impossible to see where the boundaries *are* of each child, or the teacher, or the furniture, or the drawings and so forth” (Murris 2016:12). Instead of bounded subjects, the posthuman child is a field of forces and intensities (Murris, 2016). Taylor (2013) highlights ruptures of belonging by questioning the separation of human and more-than-human subjectivity. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Taylor (2015) suggest that encounters between children and more-than-human others as embodied encounters is needed to reshape early childhood pedagogies.

Through the intra-actions of the human and more-than-human in a classroom we see a more ethical consideration of the learning process and what is considered meaning-making. We become more honouring of the multiple ways of constructing knowledge and learning when we become deliberate in our practice towards a less humanised view of what occurs in a classroom and become less interested in normative measures of knowledge (Barad 2007; Haraway 2008). In addition, we delink knowledge as part of *human* intelligences only. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2008:113) suggest that meaning-making “relates to an understanding of learning as a process of co-construction” and that through relationships meaning is made.



Fig. 13 Relationships and response-ability

“Further, individual animals, human and nonhuman, are themselves entangled assemblages of relatings knotted at many scales and times with other assemblages, organic and not” (Haraway 2008:88). In Figure 13 the many scales of knots happen intra-actively between the children and the more-than-human other.

These relationships according to feminist theorists Haraway (2008) and Barad (2007) inspire an ethic of response-ability which brings into focus the framing of entanglements of the human and the more-than-human. Relationality between the human and more-than-human ensures “right relations of the world” through weaving (Haraway 2008:91). This idea of weaving is useful as it shows the connectedness, patterns of repetition, and invention without positioning one above the other, rather it “performs and manifests the meaningful connections for kinship, behaviour, relational action for humans and nonhumans””. As posthumanists, Haraway and Barad have had a real influence on early years education researchers and practitioners. Taylor and Giugni draw on feminist relational theorists like Haraway and philosophers in their de-centring of the human child in which they “refresh their thinking about human/more-than-human relations” (2012:108). This notion is a helpful contribution towards reconfiguring quality and knowledge construction as it brings to light the agency and entanglements of not just the child, or the adult, or the material as individual subjects, but rather the “relational entanglement” (Murriss 2016:155) and intra-actions of all the individual subjects with one another. Haraway (2008:67) cited in Taylor and Giugni (2012) describes relations with others as an always becoming relational ontology and that “actual encounters are what makes beings”. Describing a generative relational ontology, Haraway (2008) sees it as a ‘becoming’ with, becoming worldly and ongoing worlding.

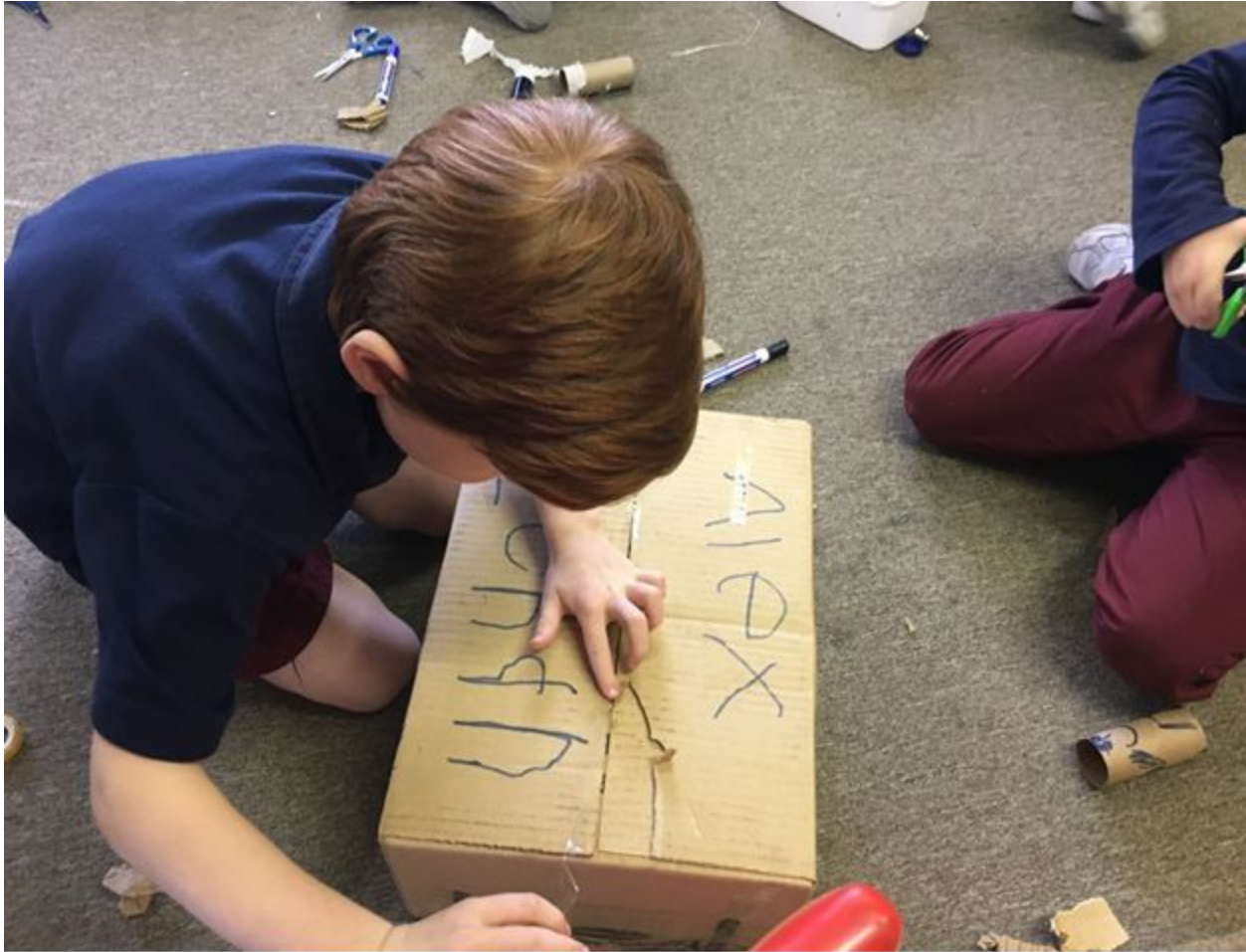


Fig. 14 Dancing with a box

Haraway (2008: 25) states: "all the actors become who they are in the dance of relating, not from scratch, not ex nihilo, but full of the patterns of their sometimes-joined, sometimes-separate heritages both before and lateral to this encounter. All of the actors are redone through the pattern they enact." In Figure 14 the actors in this encounter with a box, hands, koki, writing, name and noise in the room are being redone through the pattern being enacted. Name and letter writing have the potential to be limited to worksheets or table related paper activities in a South African classroom. In this dance with a box Evan and Adrian participate in the pattern by writing their names.

Carlina Rinaldi expands on Malaguzzi's philosophy about the image of the child by offering an explanation that Reggio Emilia schools are "as first and foremost a public space and a site for ethical and political practice—a place of encounter and connection, interaction and dialogue among citizens, younger and older, living together in community" (Rinaldi 2010:2). Editors Gunilla Dahlberg and Peter Moss, in Rinaldi's book, *In Dialogue with Reggio Emilia* (2010), argue that Reggio schools embrace in the "words of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, 'a belief in the world' and offers hope for a renewed culture of childhood" (Rinaldi 2010:2). Teachers in Reggio Emilia are influenced by a diverse input from developmental, constructivist theorists, as well as Maria Montessori, but most importantly are not bound by them and act critically so as to move beyond that which has been theorised about children. A perfect example of this is Vygotsky's and other semiotic thinkers' view of verbal or oral language where Reggio goes further and introduces 'the hundred languages of children' which is a multiplicity of languages referred to in the previous chapter (Dahlberg, Moss & Rinaldi 2012). What are other ways of proceeding as researchers in early childhood settings? Knowing human and more-than-human intra-activity and understanding relationality vs construction or developmental theories, what is needed is not another theory or curriculum but a consideration of a more ethically just educational approach and philosophy (Murriss 2016; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence 2008; Lenz Taguchi 2010).

The 100 languages

I write this section of my dissertation through Malaguzzi's widely cited poem, "No way. The Hundred is there" (Edwards, Gandini & Forman 1998:3). The poem adds more potentialities to the multiple ways of rethinking about the image of the child. The first section of this chapter has invited me to re-imagine and has made me curious about how we can ethically consider early childhood discourses differently. The poem complicates the simplified ways of regarding children in the early years classroom and throws up questions about the ways of thinking, knowledge and relationality in a Grade R classroom in South Africa.

I share the poem together with talking images.

No way. The hundred is there.*

The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.



A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds to discover
a hundred worlds to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.



The child has a hundred
languages (and a hundred
hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.



The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.
They tell the child:
to think without hands
To do without head to listen and
not to speak to understand
without joy
To love and marvel only at Easter
and at Christmas.



They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.
And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.
The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.



-LORIS MALAGUZZI* Translated by Lella Gandini (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998)

According to Malaguzzi, this metaphor of 100 languages recognises the multiple ways that children express their thoughts and hypotheses in making sense of the world of which they form a part. There are infinite possibilities for educators to conceive children's communication, participation, intra-action with materials and most importantly a responsibility to resist privileging one at the expense of another. I acknowledge that this poem is written with children in mind and therefore contributes to a child-centred narrative. In response, I add that the materials and relationality perform in a way that causes the child and adults to respond in a certain way too. I further challenge and resist the "taken-for-granted and normalising views of development and knowledge production that imply the existence of a single best and most efficient theory of learning and development" (Rinaldi 2010:10). The practices of Reggio Emilia through the view of the hundred languages are a source of inspiration in the areas of theory and practice, although with this research I push at the boundaries of the Reggio Emilia philosophy and practice by not only following the human. I also get caught up in listening with-out borders not only to the child but also the more-than-human intra-actions. According to Rinaldi (2010), the pedagogy of listening does not imply the human sense of hearing. Thinking with "the ethics of an encounter in a pedagogy of listening requires the teacher to think an Other whom she cannot grasp" which pulls us towards taking seriously "the importance of otherness and difference, connectedness and relationship" (Rinaldi 2010:12). This rich and provocative contribution of the hundred ways of encounter problematises the definitive ways of consideration, reflection and discussion about children. What would this provoke if it included the more-than-human as participant and commanding listening?

Like Rinaldi, I believe it is important to clarify that the hundred languages of children is not only a metaphor for crediting children and adults with a hundred, a thousand, creative and communicative potentials (Rinaldi 2010:138). Rather, "it is a declaration of the equal dignity and importance of all languages, not only writing, reading and counting, which has become more and

more obviously necessary for the construction of knowledge” (Rinaldi 2010:139). Literature suggests that theories and practices are always in motion and the proposed 100 languages of Malaguzzi offers a way to “put a stop to current discriminatory ageist practices routinely inflicted on earth dwellers in our homes and institutions” (Murriss 2016:153). Discriminatory ageist practices according to Peter Moss in Murriss (2016: xi), is a “prejudice in which adults claim to know what is true knowledge” and “educationally worthwhile”. Murriss (2016) continues by explaining that a disruption is needed to this discriminatory practice in order to reshape the image of child.

The relationality between children, adults and material “become a context in which the co-construction of theories, interpretations and understandings of reality can take place” (Rinaldi 2010:100). The intra-action and relationships help us rethink social cohesion, how thoughts take shape, and the connectedness expressed through different interpretations. Rinaldi explains that “new thoughts are generated; meanings are negotiated; and ‘the hundred languages’ can emerge” when educators pay attention (Rinaldi 2010:100). The kinds of ‘paying attention’ in SA schools can often be controlled and determined by teachers and school rules. Children listening with their eyes looking at the teacher, bodies facing the teacher, hands in their lap, legs folded and positioned in a row next to their peers facing the teacher or even copying what the teacher’s body is doing are examples of what is commonly understood as being attentive. Children and teachers are locked into practices that can limit other ideas of paying attention.



Fig. 15 Paying attention



With reference to Rinaldi (2010) the child in Figure 15 presents more ways of paying attention. A valuable encounter of different ways of attentiveness occurring at a table and on the mat. It is difficult to be sure whether anyone is controlling attention between the children and the adult on the mat. Bodies, faces, eyes and positions are not pointing to one spot or human. The boy who is not on the mat, demonstrates how paying attention includes materials, intra-actions and thoughts of those who are not present in the room. He and the materials are creating a message for his mother. Where generosity is present that is where more ways of being attentive is present. The educator shows a response-ability towards multiple ways of participation and attention. In the QR a new intra-action emerges as a boy and leave are seen to paying attention to each

other. There are many entanglements present in a classroom which teachers and children cannot pay attention to. This adds another theme to the important narrative that human ways of noticing is just one of multiple forms . Wee should resist learning being measured by human standards or measures.

In schools, according to Blaise, Hamm and Iorio (2016:3), “matters of fact about children are produced by teachers themselves”. Teachers are the ones who know and decide what sense of knowing is valued. In addition, “teaching standards, curricula and learning frameworks provide external norms” which further reinforce everyday practice and observations of children by educators (Blaise, Hamm & Iorio 2016:3). What is the alternative to observation for what we expect to see in early years education? In Chapter Two I explore the notion of a modest witness as an alternative to observation. I do this diffractively by engaging with the data created by the human and more-than-human participants.

Chapter Two

Unsettling practices of witnessing

In this section, I frame the study through experimenting with the figure of a modest witness and re-researching the questions raised. Working with the figure of a modest witness, I experiment with relational encounters within this school. Fikile Nxumalo (2016) refers to this as putting to work what might re(figure) more-than-human becomings in early childhood practice. In visiting and discussing early childhood theories, my role as witness is to highlight hopeful possibilities and questions that emerge in the encounters with a nest.

Modest witnessing is a concept introduced by Donna Haraway which involves deciding which stories-encounters-entanglements to make visible. Haraway's (1997) proposal of a modest witnessing considers the privileges of adult witnesses and troubles the power of the witnesses in establishing facts or knowledge through observing or witnessing. Haraway adds that what is central to this form of witnessing is the virtue that guarantees that the modest witness is the "legitimate and authorized ventriloquist for the object world, adding nothing from his mere opinions, from his biasing embodiment" (Haraway 1997:24). In an education setting I would argue that it is a practice that questions, disrupts and enquires about whose documentation and knowledge counts as quality and what matters. As human co-researcher, my role is to stay with the complicated relationality with the more-than-human, understanding and acting with the knowledge that I am an adult and have subjectivity. Tracing the figurations of modest witnessing (Haraway 1997) and experimenting with reconfiguring quality in the Grade R classrooms situates my role as a researcher as an entangled and implicated presence. I offer and experiment with tracing the entanglements of pedagogical documentation in relation to the concept of quality as well as the relationships between the human and more-than-human. Through this methodology I sediment the world through re-turning as I trace the entanglements and move towards a relational practice rather than observing for a pre-determined quality practice of what is normal witnessing. This serves to highlight my role as a modest witness and leads to my noticing where the "knots" (Haraway 1988) are between the human and the more-than-human and engage with the 'unsettling' questions thrown up, which remain unresolved. This ethical and

just way of doing research pre-determines this study in opposition to anticipated research outcomes which dictate conclusions, theories and definitive ideas.

Building on Haraway (2008), Taylor (2012) proposes that multispecies research (human and more-than-human) allows researchers to notice that the world is far more curious than we as humans assume. Nxumalo and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2017:2) contest “human exceptionalism” which comes from practices within education to develop the child or from binaries like nature/culture which work towards a humanist structure. Acknowledging the importance has very clear ethical considerations. Staying with the trouble in common world pedagogies, this challenges the nature/culture divide and rather frames the “messy” mind/body thesis and therefore, the nature versus culture divide which depends on it (Murris 2016:6). Common world research, according to Latour (2004), involves investigating the entanglements of human and more-than-human relations. Pacini-Ketchabaw, Taylor and Blaise (2015) borrow the term ‘common worlds’ from Latour as it speaks “about the necessity to reassemble all of the constituents of our worlds – including nonhuman life forms, forces and entities – within a radically expanded conceptualization of the social” (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor 2015:). Furthermore, Nxumalo and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2017:3) argue for a decentering of the child in early childhood research. This decentering of the child as the sole focus of researchers makes way for the entanglements that multispecies relations bring – what Donna Haraway (2016) calls a “staying with the trouble”. Haraway (2008) challenges the ‘common sense’ childhood nature versus culture binary through the concept of naturecultures – always messy and uneven. It draws on a relational ontology whereby human and more-than-human are not in power positions over one another, bringing into focus our response-ability as co-researchers with children in early years education.

Taylor (2013) continues by saying that hopefully this response-ability and obligations have the potential not only to transform ethical research but also to change sustainability of common worlds. Taylor and Giugni (2012:108) see ‘common worlds’ as a “conceptual framework designed to reconceptualise inclusion in early childhood communities”. Common worlds take into account the ethics and politics of living together and the acknowledging of children’s relations with all others, including the more-than-human others.

Thus, moving towards a more ethical and political act, Taylor and Giugni (2012:113) propose ‘Common worlding’ as a way of grappling with dilemmas and tensions that arise when we “co-inhabit differences” and in so doing collect, bring together, and assemble our common worlds with more-than-human others. Furthermore, Blaise, Hamm and Iorio (2016:9) agree that “encouraging a practice of modest witness(ing) that focuses on more-than-human *relations*, rather than *children*, is a radical change in thinking and doing” (own emphasis). The notion of child-centredness further assumes human exceptionalism as well as seeing child as a construct developed by more ‘knowledgeable’ adults. As argued in Chapter One, moving away from child-centred education, I look more closely at larger situated human *and* non-human networks. As Fikile Nxumalo and Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw suggest, I investigate:

entanglements of more-than-human pedagogies which focuses on the complexities of the relationships between the human and more-than-human within the classroom rather than solely on how children might benefit from these relations

(Nxumalo & Pacini-Ketchabaw 2017:10).

In *When Species Meet* (2008), Haraway explains that ‘knots’ are when “diverse bodies and meanings co-shape one another” (2008:4). She continues by saying that in play, “too much weight has been loaded” on the questions of the “doing of the great variety of animals and people” (Haraway 2008:234). Haraway (2008:250) explains her knots in relation to Latour’s (2007) ‘things’ being “the material, specific, non-self-identical and semiotically active”.



Fig. 16 Entanglement of bodies

I propose that the 'unfolding' of things are made visible in Figure 16. A fleshy entanglement of bodies, nest, leaves and other non-self-identical figures. The way that bodies are working and participating in this image describes a different narration to what bodies look like inside a classroom. The way the children use their hands, heads, arms together knotted with the leaves and ground put forward more than the individual subjects. Haraway suggests that there is no way of answering the question of the more-than-human's "agential engagement in meanings", just as there is no way



of giving a universal account of “human meaning making” (2008:262). I’m uncertain about how I am affected by this encounter in Figure 16 but am clear that I am drawn into questioning of normalised ways of observation. I join the ‘messiness’ and understand that my witnessing of encounters cannot be about representation, explanation or observation. When following the traces of the QR code sound and voices create more disturbances to how limited photos are and the importance of multiple forms of documenting.

Troubling the power of witnessing

Becoming aware of how we observe in early childhood education settings means we can consider new ways of noticing relationships. Canella and Viruru (2004) build on Foucault’s (1977) discussion about the technology of power that creates a “common practice of surveillance and observation” when working with children (Canella & Viruru 2004:48). Forms of surveillance like hierarchical observation uses pre-determined standards of what is considered ‘normal’ which could also be seen as a way of looking for what is expected. According to Foucault (1977), practices of documentation and surveillance constrain responses because of what is predicted and leads to “creating practiced docile bodies” (Canella & Viruru 2004:49). Haraway’s (2008) notion of ethical response-ability brings into focus our responsiveness to a happening that is present but not always seen. Rather, this work brings in more democratic discourses that problematise human-centred practices. Adding to Haraway’s perspective, Blaise, Hamm and Iorio (2016) bring in the question around the ‘clinical’ way that children are observed and influenced by developmental theories and constructed universal ideas about children. Drawing further on Latour (2004) and Blaise, Hamm and Iorio (2016), I too, try and witness without separating nature from culture or adult and child from nature. Taylor (2013) and Latour (2004) explains that concepts of childhood where nature and culture are separated or divided

form part of the western popular imaginary and conventional limitations. Taylor (2013) de-romanticises these views with reconfiguring theories about the relationship between child and nature as “infinitely more dynamic and complex” than singular thoughts or ideas (Taylor 2013:xiii).



Fig. 17 Nest-shaped figures

I am suspicious about my identification of the shape that the bodies have formed on the mat in Figure 17. The shape of the nest seems present in the way that the humans are positioned on the mat. I resist the idea that it is a representation but rather see it as an intra-action. A representation limits the relationship and force between the nest itself, the mat and the humans. This formation of this figure takes its shape in a non-representational way in the sense that the circle works like a nest in this enquiry.

The potential to push beyond common ways of noticing and observing exists when we accept the

invitation from Haraway (2016) to ask hard questions about our relational entanglements with more-than-human others. According to Jones, Osgood, Holmes and Urban (2016a:4) this framework of relationality brings into being an “intricate web of qualities woven throughout entanglements” of human and more-than-human others. Listening to the work of Barad, Bennett, Braidotti and Haraway I respond to an offer to re-think and re-conceptualise understandings and theoretical assemblages, I avail myself to my research in early childhood to more ethical possibilities of child and childhood discourses. This would include more than the child human. How as a researcher, can I participate in the unsettling of dominant framings of quality measured through what is selected for documentation? I hypothesise that through an exploratory approach of thinking with early childhood scholars, witnessing modestly, and re-turning to notions of what counts as quality, the potential to disrupt familiar patterns will be made visible.

Haraway (1997:3) explains that the modest witness “cannot ever be simply oppositional”. Instead s/he is “suspicious, implicated, knowing, ignorant, worried, and hopeful” in a “net of stories, agencies and instruments” and at the same time seeking to “learn and practice” mixed ways of knowing and “differential consciousness” (Haraway 1997:3). A researcher has to take the shape and form of a modest witness that tells the truth, gives reliable testimony, guarantees important things, provides sufficient grounding while at the same time re(figures) the subjects and objects into “different kinds of knots” (Haraway 1997:23). This form of modesty “pays off its practitioners in the coin of epistemological and social power” and ensures that the witness is “legitimate” and an “authorised ventriloquist for the object world” and adds nothing from her “mere opinions” or “biasing embodiment” (Haraway 1997:24).

The narratives told by a modest witness loses its tracing of history as mere stories, constructed documents with a capacity to demonstrate fact or a contestable representation. Instead, the narratives become “clear mirrors, fully magical mirrors, without once appealing to the transcendental or the magical” (Haraway 1997:24). The point that Haraway (1997) calls into view is to make “situated knowledges possible in order to make consequential claims about the world and on each other” (Haraway 1997:267). In their contribution to early childhood through paying attention to matters of concern, Mindy Blaise, Catherine Hamm and Jeanne Marie Iorio (2016:9) propose that modest witnessing engages with new kinds of relationships by recognising

“the material and discursive, the past and present, the teacher and the child and the more-than-human in ways” (Blaise, Hamm & Iorio 2016:9). This way of working in schools is unfamiliar and is in opposition to the human exceptionalist ways mentioned previously. Resisting does not stand in a place of fully knowing, as it is not necessary nor possible to fully know, but it is a calling to noticing the en-count-ers and connections.



Fig. 18 Girl and nest

Haraway (2018:42) suggests that “Appreciation of the complexity is, of course, invited.” This encounter between the nest and girl seems a reciprocal connectedness and I feel invited to be affected by it (Fig. 18). I did not respond by asking her questions as it might have reduced the encounter to a human or child-centred account. The tension in the web of including-excluding, listening without words and encountering without defining is not simple. It is also not fully explainable.

A 100 and a 100 more with a nest

On Day One of my data creation, the teachers had prepared and planned provocations based on discussions with the children at the end of the previous term. This was the first day of the new



Week 1	9-13 October	Africa
Week 2	16-19 October	South America
Week 3	23-27 October	North America
Week 4	30 October-3 November	Australia
Week 5	6-10 November	Europe
Week 6	13-17 November	Asia
Week 7	20-24 November	Antarctica
Week 8	27 November-1 December	Art expo prep
Week 9	4-8 December	Art expo prep

Fig. 19 Term topics

term. The classroom had been prepared for activities and project work related to the written planning, which was displayed in the office (Fig. 19). The teachers mentioned their interest and curiosity in how the weeks would unfold with the theme of countries. They had spent time during the week of school holidays researching different creative materials, activities and provocations to possibly use.



Fig. 20 Nest encounters

On this particular day the principal brought a nest to school which her husband had found (Fig. 20). The teacher introduced the nest to the children and what unfolded was an enquiry on the mat about the nest. The nest could be considered as an interference or an interruption in the learning as it creates a disturbance in the objectives that have been set out in the planning. What does it mean that the teachers and children respond to the nest? I was intrigued by how this nest works with the children, teachers, materials and environment inside and outside the school as well as the curriculum. I accept the invitation from the nest, children, materials and teachers to notice the 100 and a 100 more ways of thinking, exploring, discovering and researching. In a continuous critical engagement, I was curious about how this nest brought hopeful potentialities of new knowledges through relationships.

In *Staying with Trouble* (2008), Donna Haraway suggests witnessing implores an ongoing questioning of our responses and accountabilities. I followed not as an observer but as an entangled co-researcher and co-creator with the children, teachers and the more-than-human others. This was not an easy way of be-coming with the human and more-than-human others. Having worked in schools before, I am influenced and have become part of normalised ways of observing children at a distance. I have memories of working with developmental theory suggestions about normative ways in which children should act, engage and master based on their age. Spending time in classrooms making suggestions and offering strategies to equip children to achieve the age norms in a linear and pre-determined way. I recall this as a real memory of the past which is not separated from intentions in the present even though I aim to move towards a witnessing practice that disrupts expected ways of noticing, descriptions of encounters and become “physically vulnerable” to my own “visions and representations” (Haraway 1997:267). It is expected in a Grade R classroom that the plan and activities set out are designed to achieve the expected and pre-determined outcomes for learning. A planned strategy means predictions and implementations of a sequence of events. On the other hand, one could use a strategy that allows for unfolding (Taylor 2012), re-turning (Barad 2014), constructing and deconstructing (Rinaldi 2010). This way of using strategies makes use of “adversity, chance, and error” and requires “listening, flexibility and curiosity” (Rinaldi 2010:103). It is for this reason that the Reggio Emilia approach (which my research site subscribes to) prefers to use the term *progettazione* as it describes levels of action which “are definite and indefinite at the same time”

(Rinaldi 2010:103). Progettazione is used in Reggio in opposition to predefined curricula, programmes and stages Rinaldi (2010) as it is a more flexible approach in which initial thoughts and hypotheses are made about classroom work with the children and teachers and the project is moved forward ('projected') through the care-ful use of the 100 languages.

Haraway (2006) creates new possibilities and considerations for the political and ethical potentialities moving through human/more-than-human encounters, by asking: "Which worldings and which sorts of temporalities and materialities erupt" in an early year's classroom setting (2006:145). Responding to her call to become responsible to the worldings enacted through specific encounters, I experiment with refiguring what is possible through contesting ideas about what is excluded when documenting knowledges. Paying attention to the curriculum, teachers and children's ideas about material and learning I affect and am affected (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) by human and more-than-human relationalities with past-present histories, and the tensions that are thrown up through what is documented. My participation as a modest witness is inspired through all the intra-actions, knots, entanglements and interruptions that this nest brings. The multiple connections, curiosities and movement through encounters reveal a disruption of definitive ways of knowing. I am drawn into a whirlwind of a 100 and a 1000 more ways of showing, thinking, participating, constructing and creating that takes place during my time with the children and when re-turning to the data. I affect and am affected by the multiple ways that the children contaminate the theories and constructed ways of knowing and learning. Impositions of a child as developing, constructed and universal etc. become challenged because the "hundred is there" (Edwards, Gandini & Forman 1998). Through the multiple entanglements of human and more-than-human others I am propelled into marvelling at the 100 languages being present.

Colebrook (2006) presents Deleuze's argument that runs through his entire work that "life is a changing multiplicity of becomings" and clarifies that this is not about a being that becomes "but the potential for any movement or becoming to alter or connect with any other". I wonder with some of the transcriptions and images from this research project about experimenting with orientations that inspire more ways of noticing be(com)ings, relationality and dispelling normative and global measurement of learning.



Fig. 17 Nest-shaped figures

Lena: I was just wondering Teacher Penny, how did the daddy get the grass so round?

Because when I see grass in the field, it's straight.

Penny: How do birds get that shape?

Child 1: They ... twist it!

Child 2: They bend it with their beak!

Penny: Do they do that with their - So they know how to plait almost? Is it like plaiting?

Oh wow, Suzanne is showing us here, with their beak... that is actually hard work!

Okay, should we all go outside and get some sticks and twigs and make a nest with our mouths?

Some children: Yes, yes!

Some children: No, no!

Child 3: That's disgusting! I don't want to make it because I'm not good at it... [unclear]... I'm not and I don't know how to do it.

During the inquiry on the mat different modes of attention through words, bodies and thoughts portrays a shape that makes me think of the nest. Although it is not on the mat it feels alive and intra-acting with the formations in Figure 17 above. As movement takes place through time and within this inquiry of a nest. I resist giving a linear account of the encounter by associating knots with characters and subjects. The children, the teachers, questions, materials, storying with-out words push into my position as a re-searcher. The facilitator in the shape, asks a multi-directional question which is one of wonder rather than one that demands a definition. It creates a search and exploration for possibilities. The teacher responds with a question not answer. The children's voices become part of different alternatives that presents a multiplicity of possibilities. In the transcription above messy overlaps of children choosing not to follow the suggestion from the educator to go outside and the connections between indoor and outdoor gives attention to multiple ways of becoming.



Fig. 21 Leaves and limbs

What is unfolding when the children and teachers make a decision to move from the mat and leave the room? The materials, land, textures, wind and their bodies intra-acting in ways that cannot be described or measured. How are the bodies listening, seeing and affected by the intra-actions and knots that occur? I sense the

expectancy, joy and wonder in the sounds, movement and figurations of bodies (Fig. 21).

I stay inside for a while and listen to the children who stay inside. It is a continuous storying as the sounds of the wind and bodies outside as well as the children inside are participating even though they are not physically present with each other. The thoughts and intra-actions of the children in the classroom with the chairs, floor and each other pursues other ideas about nests while outside, leaves, bodies and wind swirl into a worlding together. I insist that this is a real protest against the curriculum and its measured quality. These encounters bring affordances to a more expansive idea of learning and dispels normativity or conventional ways of knowing.



Fig. 22 Bird-like bodies

Penny: Hey boys and girls, Adrian has just brought up an interesting point, could they possibly also use their feet for certain things?

Adrian: Ja, they use their beak to put it in the one place because they only have one beak. And how could they use their wings? They can't go like - [opens and closes hand].

Penny: We're all stuck on mouths, but look! Adrian is using his feet. Not hands, they don't have hands. But they could use their feet.

Adrian: We could just take our shoes and our socks off and use our toes!

Penny: Woah, like, like claws!

What is possible when we witness the intricacies of the concept of teacher? In the transcription above, Adrian knots knots of multiple languages of marvelling and wonder. It is not so much about what sparked this more-than-human ways of building a nest with claws and beaks, rather, what is illuminated is the intra-action between child/teacher/bird through which new knowledges are produced. The teacher connects with this thought of birds having more than hands or feet that

Adrian brings, and invites the children into this moment. Adrian sits on the floor and starts taking his shoes off as seen in Figure 22. I am caught up in this powerful urge to be like a bird and not human only as he starts a new weave of how to nest or build a home. In Chapter One I mention the troubled cementing of topics in Life Skills as they perform exclusionary walls for human and more-than-human relationships. This is validated when we look specifically at topics which are designed with humanist views as seen in Figure 22 and the clear separation of human and more-than-human through concepts. Adding more storying to this, the specific aims of physical and social development in the CAPS Life Skills curriculum mentioned in Chapter One creates more of a wall by separating “the head from the body” (Malaguzzi, in Edwards, Gandini & Forman 1998).

How does this co-creation outside with thoughts, body, socks, toes, human, more-than-human testify that learning cannot be constructed in categories or topics with boundaried predictions? Setting to work of disrupting notions that a topic like ‘My Home’ in the curriculum (see Fig. 11) with its clear pre-determined path, I continue to participate in what unfolds after being outside with the nest. As a co-researcher I put forward alternative assemblages in the figurations that follow. I offer alternatives to fixed curricula or conceptual knowledge by drawing attention to the multi-species relationality that is always taking place in early childhood settings.



Fig. 23 Blue bird

Matthew and Blue Bird (Fig. 23):

- *I'm going to go outside and I'm gonna take him out of my bag and I'm going to put him, and then he can eat some leaves.*
- *And I'm going to let him sit in our little nest that we made outside.*
- *But I'm gonna rather put him in my bag because it's safe.*
- *Yes, because the bag has a roof, and what if it rains.*
- *Because when it rains it might make him sad.*
- *Because that means that the ink of the eye is coming off*

Joanne: So where are you going now?

Matthew: I'm going to play with him for a bit

He doesn't have to into my bag, because I wanted to have a bit of fun.

Moving out/in/side I am struck by how It matters what stories we (Matthew, Blue Bird and I) use to tell stories with. So many multiple relatings are being formed in this

narrative with Blue Bird as collective thinking together and understandings become part of this assemblage. I'm moved by the many layers of intra-actions that Blue Bird and Matthew invite me to participate in. So many considerations of care, relationship and wonder in this encounter which affect me every time I re-turn to this story-ing. I am affected by the bird and child weaving pedagogical narrations showing connectedness and patterns of relationality.

Re-turning inside the classroom, weavings with materials which were set out before the enquiry emerged with the nest continues. The teachers had planned a progettazione, the nest enquiry generates other pedagogical narratives. New knots are seen when child, nest, and teacher participate in assemblages with other hypotheses and relatings. Matthew draws attention to his entanglement with the nest outside by referring to it with Blue Bird which is seen in the transcription above and the plans to invite Blue Bird into the nest that was built outside. Thoughts, theories and hypotheses are not separated by time or place according to Barad (2007). I am struck by this as it is so evident in the disruption of the plans and time frames of the curriculum. Curriculum plans by design act as limits for discussions. It determines lessons and topics to which timetables and weekly plans respond. These very patterns are brought into question in what unfolds in this classroom. The boundaries are blurred between beginnings and endings of thoughts, lessons, participation and creations as I move with the children and teachers from indoors to outdoors and indoors. Toilet roll, blue paper and glue are some of the materials that participate with the children in new creations in different spaces and patterning. The dominant languages of reading, writing and readiness silence the 100 languages of children. In this encounter with Blue Bird I witness the sensitivities of the teachers to listen to the multiple ways that children play, invent, design, construct, and make meaning. Their response to working with materials and documentation as agents to bring the multiple ways of relating affects me in this encounter.



Fig. 24 Figurations with dough

Penny: Is this inside a house or like a kennel.

Evan: It is a bed with a field around it.

.....

Penny: Why does he have two bowls?

Evan: Because he has to have food and water.

My intention here is to point to the complexities of multiple ways that journeys with materials re-conceptualise how learning is shown. The child, teacher and more-than-human others mould together with playdough in Figure 24. In my view, this is a more ethical consideration for meaning-making. The co-construction of a home is a response to further understandings of the relationality of the learning process (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2018; Haraway 2008) as it makes possible more than just what is physically taking place or documented in a photograph or artefact. While bird nest exists, a home for a dog also forms part of the pedagogical narrative. This is where we witness newer knots and considerations being present.

Continuing with complexities and multiple ways, we need to consider how it matters when we do not centre our focus on the reading and writing or the acquisition of skills or abilities in an early years classroom (Rinaldi 2010; Osgood 2015). I concur with Lenz Taguchi (2010) and Haraway (2016) that we become open to multiple ways of thinking and doing in the classroom when we start witnessing the less known stories that occur. Focusing on the intra-actions and the relationality of human and more-than-human others, different stories become available and

re-conceptualises ideas about quality. We are called into newer wonderings and worldings because multiple stories become part of how we consider what is present in a lesson, classroom, enquiry, activity and how it matters.



Fig. 25 Mmm eggs

Echoing the work in Chapter one about pre-determined outcomes and the dominant languages of writing and reading I am intrigued by the encounter with eggs in Figure 25. The knot where words, nest, letters and materials meet bring into sharp focus the more than 100 ways of knowing and being in an early childhood setting. There are no workbooks or prescribed designs at this table. I witness connections with other materials in the room as the children bring to the table other materials. This is another newer knot being formed as generally children are limited to only relate to what is present on the table. The crayon, paint and paper meet at the table with the child in an entangled becoming. I witness languaging and embodied expressions through intra-actions as the lesser noticed stories in curriculum designs occupies space in this encounter. The narration and story-ing between the child and nest generate an alternative story for what counts as quality learning in an early childhood classroom through what is seen and unseen. Can this be measured or fully described? I resist concluding this encounter by reducing it to what only I notice, instead I am certain there is more discovering and unfolding. An example of this is through my re-turning to this photograph the arrow and its connection to the sketch, words and materials draws me into a different encounter. Questioning around how arrows work is a co-created as part of this re-doing and de-composing of imaginings.



Fig. 26 Entangled feather



Nesting indoors:

Umair: When we saw the birds nest, I saw those white things in the nest, and I thought they maybe take clouds and they put it in their nest.

Penny: Umair was using his imagination. He actually, he wondered, those little white things that were on the side, Adrian saw that they were feathers, but when he first saw, he thought maybe the birds had gone and caught some cloud. And put some cloud.

Nesting outdoors:

In Figure 26 Umair is with his teacher and a feather.

Penny: Wow, that's amazing! You can actually put it in. But use your beak, use your mouth. Or are you going to use your claws? Haha! What are you going to use, Umair? What are you going to use to put it in there? Your beak?

Umair: [Nods]

Penny: Okay, birdie, put it in your beak, there we go. Come put it in, very nice. I love it, I love it.

Adrian: Wow! He found a feather!

Penny: Where did you find it? Where did you find that?

Umair: When I was walking to school.

Penny: And then you thought this would be the perfect thing for our special nest?

Umair: [Nods]

Penny: That is amazing that you're being so generous with that, hey Umair? And that you remembered that. Well done.

Adrian: Guy, look what I've got some things, like my piece of wool from my pants that I, that it pulled off because it was too long.

Penny: Okay so, so, maybe we need to look for treasures in the garden and not on our pants, hey?



Fig. 27 Re-turn-ing to the nest

As a co-participant in this unfolding story outdoors, I noticed Umair going inside and stopping at his bag. After unzipping his bag he draws out a feather. This happens after quite some time of nesting with the leaves and children outdoors. It is not necessarily important about what moves Umair to fetching the feather, rather I propose that the importance is the connectedness of a feather collected on the way to school and this co-created entanglement. Show and tell in a Grade R classroom is timetabled as a lesson where children bring something to show and talk about with their teacher and peers. In many cases the connection to enquiries in the classroom is very thin. In my view, this feather's agency in its entanglement with Umair's bag, the teacher, the nest, Adrian who questions and myself suggests something more. Participation across time spaces, co-creates an accountability to witness and re-imagine how we should resist following only the child in a classroom. What possibilities can be imagined when we follow the feather?

How else then do we re-imagine participation through decentering children performing in a curriculum and teachers oppressed by a curriculum? I argue that we should rather pay attention

to meanings being negotiated through relationships with the human and more-than-human other. Staying with the troubling ideas of not following the human I am called into a more responsible politics and account of complex assemblages. In the following chapter I explore particular politicised curiosities as well as openings to my own unsettling practices that re-story (Cameron 2011) this experience as a co-participant. I follow the tracing of knots and intra-actions with pedagogical documentation that formed part of the practice with the children. In so doing, I am placed within multiple connecting “temporalities and materialities” responding to different and more ethical views of children and the encounters that take place between and through the relationships in this classroom (Haraway 2006:145). How do we proceed thinking with the documentation? How does documentation of this encounter with a nest work beyond this time?

There is a rhythmic character when we find that we no longer have a simple situation of a rhythm associated with a character, subject, or impulse. The rhythm itself is now the character in its entirety.

Deleuze and Guattari 1987:318

Chapter Three

Pedagogical documentation

Re-turning to the work of early years education detailed in Chapter One and the alternative arrangements through modest witnessing discussed in Chapter Two, I am curious about their connections with documentation. Within South African schools, documentation is present in many shapes and forms. As mentioned in Chapter One, teachers in South African schools are bound by multiple forms of documentation. The thread of documentation woven into early years spaces intrigues me as it is not considered as an active participant in schools. Three threads swirl around each other in this chapter; firstly, writings of pedagogical documentation as a practice; secondly, a pedagogical documentation as narrative part relationships in-between a nest; and

thirdly, hopeful potentialities between CAPS and pedagogical documentation as a practice.

	✓	✗
I can talk about my family.		
I can walk on a thin line.		
I know the phone number for the police.		
I know about "yes" and "no" feelings.		
I can catch a ball.		
I can stay safe in my home.		
I can look after myself if I am at home alone.		
I help my family.		
I know my way around my school.		
I know how to keep myself healthy.		
I know what to do with all the things in my school bag.		
I know about different kinds of families.		
I have learned a lot in Life Skills.		

Fig. 28 Documentation for checking

Pedagogical documentation is not observation

The very nature of what is explicitly selected for documenting like children's written pieces, worksheets, as well as teachers observation sheets used for reflecting competency, written reporting to parents and departmental officials as a form of reflection of measured expected outcomes. Figure 28 (Department of Basic Education, 2011:62) is found in a DBE Term 2 workbook in Week 8. It is a worksheet at the end of a

Life Skills topic but designed for assessing competency in physical and cognitive ability. The title is Just checking. But, who is checking, and what are they checking, and who has given permission for them to check? How does the ticking matter? What is the purpose of the checking? This checking is an indication of what is valued and measured as quality learning. To choose thirteen criteria that is all related to human performances and selecting concepts which require yes or no responses is of major concern. What is the concept healthy? Can it be defined and answered with a tick or cross? Is there potential to enquire, interrogate or deconstruct the concept of healthy when the outcome is to assess through a question: "I know how to keep myself healthy?"

Written documentation and recording is a complicated and complex practice in a South African classroom. Teachers and children are faced with influences that position documentation as an obstacle that limits relationship between them rather than a tool that actively participates with them. In other words, teachers and children don't communicate through documentation as an ongoing discovery or learning relationship but it is used as a form of summative assessment of learning. Normally speaking, documentation is positioned as the silent partner that informs the teacher of their success in teaching, the learners' performance in relation to the teaching and the quality of both. Barad (2014) suggests that an apparatus cannot be separated from the observed phenomenon. If we acknowledged documentation as an apparatus how could we understand its role in an early years setting differently? Documenting learning plays a vital role in school communities however, what troubles me about documenting is not *that* it is used, but rather *how* it is used and *theorised* (Lenz Taguchi 2010; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2007; Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010; Taylor 2013). The outcome of the relationship between normative observations and the measures of performance grounds much of classroom practice. Teachers use developmental theory milestones or curriculum goals based on child theories as performance markers in their checklists. Particularly in what is recorded or observing through one or two of the 100 languages like written assessments or formal assessment tasks (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2007). The questions raised in Chapter One regarding pre-determined goals in education, observation and images of a child as developing (child as i) and constructed (child as ii) leads me to understand

how the work of documentation can further reinforce these theories of the image of the child as constructed, developing or lesser beings (Moss, in Murris 2016).

The assumption that an “objective, external truth can be recorded and represented accurately” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Taylor & Blaise 2015:123) further contributes to an inaccurate view that documentation is objective. This forms part of the practice and events within early years education classrooms that determine what is included or excluded in documentation. This way of recording by the teacher is not focussed on connections and intra-dependency between all human and more-than-human others. Furthermore “the teacher observes from a distance and there is no room for doubt within these matters of facts” recorded through this way of documenting (Blaise, Hamm & Iorio 2016:6).

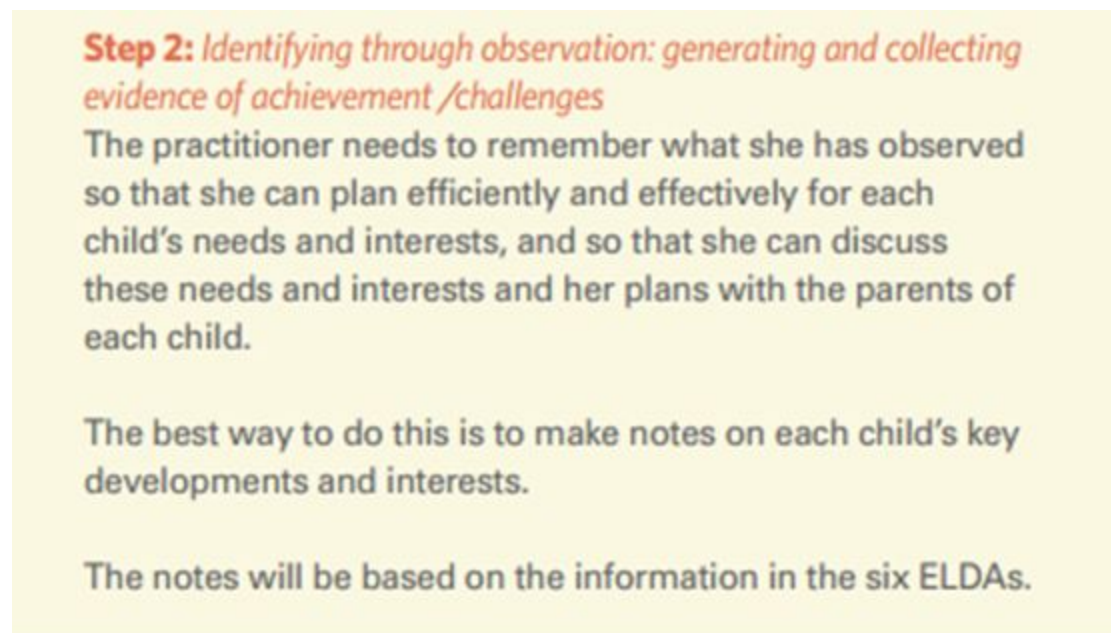


Fig. 29 Whose steps

In the South African National Curriculum framework for children from birth to four (Department of Basic Education 2015) there are clear steps for teachers to follow as a means to “support children’s holistic development and assessment of children’s progress and potential” (Department of Basic Education 2015:2). This collecting and generating evidence is not pedagogical documentation. It is looking for measured or

predicted markers like school readiness in Grade R as an example. In this way children are reduced to subjects who perform according to assessments and standards. In Figure 29 above: “The practitioner needs to remember what she has observed so that she can plan efficiently and effectively for each child’s needs and interests, and so that she can discuss these needs and interests and her plans with the parents of each child. The best way to do this is to make notes on each child’s key developments and interests. The notes will be based on the information in the six ELDAs” (Department of Basic Education 2015:2). Again, who’s the documentation for? Who participates in what is recorded in these steps? Are these steps a movement or a design that excludes the child?

Children’s learning processes through conventional documentation is classified and categorised “in relation to a general schema of developmental levels and stages” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2006:145). Observation, assessment and record keeping become more like a “technology of normalisation” and makes a school seem like a “producer of child outcomes, including developmental progress” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2006:145).

Pedagogical documentation as an educational practice

Pedagogical documentation is a central part of the Reggio Emilia approach to education. The practice of pedagogical documentation facilitates collaborative co-research, planning and reflection (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008). Freire (1996:108, in Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008) suggests that pedagogical documentation is “a tool to assist critical and reflexive thinking and understanding of pedagogical work”, by enabling us “to submit practice to strict, methodological and rigorous questioning”. By contrast, Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo, Kocher, Elliot and Sanchez in their book *Journeys* (2015) explain pedagogical documentation as a practice not a tool that involves teachers and children as part of a process and cannot exist apart from their involvement in the process. We are all “active subjects and participants as we co-construct and co-produce documentation” (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. 2015:123). Seeing pedagogical documentation as a practice presents opportunities to imagine it having agency rather than as a tool that is used by

the children and teachers in a classroom. A key consideration is that pedagogical documentation is not a representation of reality and therefore “makes it easier to critically analyze the constructed character of our documentation and to find methods to counteract and resist dominant regimes” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2007:147). Pedagogical documentation tools can include, but not be limited to, photographs, audio clips, written notes, artefacts, whiteboard or chalkboard notes and the use of mobile devices or laptops. Different tools suit different moments or stages of recording and documenting. Each tool participates in the process, and being limited to one tool creates disadvantages, for example, if notetaking is the only way of documenting it can have a downside in the time it takes to write and who does the writing (Krechevsky, Mardell, Rivard and Wilson 2013).

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2006), building upon Rinaldi’s (2010) view of the role of pedagogical documentation, explain that it can also be used as a tool for reflection but more importantly as a “pedagogical practice and as a means for the construction of an ethical relationship to ourselves, to the Other and the world” which they have termed as an “ethics of encounter” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2006:144). The role of the teacher as an observer is extended to interpreter and researcher (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 1999, 2007; Dahlberg & Moss 2005). Observation is an important skill for most early childhood teachers but the educators in Reggio Emilia have taken observation to a different level (Dahlberg & Moss 2005). Likewise, Rinaldi (2010:12) states that “it embodies the value of subjectivity, that there is no objective point of view that makes observation neutral; but at the same time, it insists on the need for rigorous subjectivity, by making perspectives and interpretations explicit and contestable through documenting in relationship with others”. These others being children, parents, educators and community are rendered able because “documentation fosters a conflict of ideas and argumentation, not a cosy search for consensus, it is a way to capture subjectivities interacting in a group” (Rinaldi 2010:12). Pam Oken-Wright (2001) suggests that documentation is like a mirror that reflects our theory and practice. The 100 languages of children contribution sees documentation as being “like a beacon, it lights the winding path of investigation” (Oken-Wright 2001:5). Oken-Wright goes on to say that “we must go on to a deeper translation of the term *documentation*” (Oken-Wright 2001:5). Continuing this conversation, Dahlberg and Moss in Lenz Taguchi (2010:xiii) add that “documentation is not only a multi-purpose tool, of use in

evaluation, researching, professional development and planning. Nor is it just a tool for bringing democratic politics into the pre-school, opening up pedagogical work to the public gaze and to public argumentation.”

Tracing the messy and unequal relationships that are always present in an early childhood classroom and in the relationships between the human and more-than-human other, how can pedagogical documentation offer an alternative? I argue that educators are explicitly entangled in what is recorded, what they exclude and what they consider relevant for recording. Referring back to the demands of the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS), as a teacher performance measure it is evident that external systems work against a more ethical practice for teachers. The force of measurement systems like IQMS is alive in its influences in a classroom as teachers are enlisted to a process of diagnosing children as under-developed, under construction and inactive in their learning.



Fig. 30 Documentation

For many educators, for example, quality documentation for display boards are chosen based on who is looking at them, which is mainly parents or other staff and visitors to the school. This means that adults decide what is valued or what should be

made visible. In most cases it is a reflection of completed tasks and displays end products not process. Knowing this, how can we re-imagine what is on a display board in classroom? What does oral contribution, material and human relationality present

as alternatives for documentation? In Figure 30 the children's voices, thoughts, material prints, designs and inquiries perform together in a pattern of possibilities for the night sky. While we are co-researching this nested enquiry, I become part of another narration. I find myself as a participant in a story-ing of hypothesis and thoughts about the night sky. Grappling with the difference that arise in this encounter, I suggest that this board attends to more relatings. This brings me to wonder about how documentation could be considered as part of an alternative story-ing within a South African classroom?

In continuing to grapple with dilemmas that arise when collecting and assembling common worlds with human and more-than-human others, how do we re-think about notice boards and their intra-active nature? Parents and community members are often outsiders to the encounters during school hours. Pedagogical documentation performs the necessary work of continued knotting of learning and relationality represented in Figure 30. Pedagogical documentation participates with the children and teachers to provide a narrative that identifies intra-actions and newer ways to notice learning together. The display boards can offer engagement and serve as continuous webs of relations and unfolding when pedagogical documentation is part of an early years practice. The children, teachers, materials, parents, world come together through the pedagogical documentation which is made visible on a platform like a display board. It is not limited to the moment of seeing a board as a record of an event. By contrast it extends way beyond to make way for “traces of history made visible through pedagogical narrations in the shape of posters, photographs, children’s work” and potentialities for participation and re-turning (Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010:64).

Those inspired by the revolutionary, reconceptualist nature of the programs in Reggio Emilia have transformed practice from a fundamental level – by re-imagining the child and the role of early childhood educators and institutions (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 1999, 2007; Moss & Petrie 2002; Rinaldi 2006). Pedagogical documentation, in particular, has provided researchers, educators, and young children with the opportunity to engage in collaborative reflection so that collective understandings may be gained.



Fig. 31 Documenting in multiple ways

When speaking about the power of pedagogical documentation, Rinaldi (2010:12) claims the practice of pedagogical documentation most simply expressed, is an admittedly subjective process for making “pedagogical (or other) work visible and subject to interpretation, dialogue, confrontation (argumentation) and understanding”. Documenting pedagogically is not simply taking photos, writing thoughts down or displaying artworks as mentioned previously, it is also about projecting forward (progettazione). How then can it be used as an agent for relationality in an early years classroom?

Adrian: A nest, but the nest is with a bird.

Penny: Mmhmm? Do the nest and birds always go together?

Adrian: Ja.

Penny: So that's why you chose to do the bird and a nest?

Adrian: Ja. And, and, and you lay in here, and he even has a birdie blankie.

Penny: How do you make that? Because that's quite a thing to make, your own birdie blankie! Do you think birds can make their own blankies?

Adrian: Ja.

Penny: Could they? You don't think so, James?

Adrian: Ja, 'cause they use some cotton-wool?

Penny: Cotton-wool?

Adrian: Ja, that they find on the ground that people drop from artwork and, and then they use it as their blankie.

James: But how do they even knit it?

Penny: How do they knit it? James has got a good point. How do they make it? How do

they actually knit it?

Adrian: No, they just use a lot of string to cover their whole body. This one [points to wool], but only when they're a little one.

Penny: Now, Adrian, afterwards, before I asked you, could we, could we attach these two [pointing to Adrian's bird and nest] because I wanted to display them, and you said that the bird must be able to be free. So, you can't stick him on? Because, that's not, that's not what it m- he's got to be free?

Joanne: So where is he?

Penny: Show Mrs Peers which is the bird.

Adrian: [Points to bird in nest]

Joanne: Oh, I see! There, I see.

Penny: That's the bird. But he can be free.

Joanne: Oh, he was under his blankie.

Penny: He was under his blankie already.

In Figure 31 a few forms of documentation take place. The child and the materials co-created a form of documentation of thoughts, ideas and theories about homes, relationships and birds provoked by the nest. He then draws and writes on paper as another form of documentation. Thereafter the entanglement of his co-creation with the materials and his drawing is documented by his teacher as she listens to his thoughts and records it. She does not only listen but participates through questioning, commenting and interpretation. She is not an outsider. The next knot of documentation is the photograph she takes of all the documentation as an entangled relationality between wool, paper, hands, card, writing, crayons, the child, ideas, playdough, thoughts, words etc. The movement between languages makes visible different entanglements. The tracing with playdough, constructions, illustrations all work together as part of the learning, ideas and theorising with a nest. It was only after re-turning to the data creation that I witnessed my role as a documenter as well. I was documenting the teacher, documenting the child and more-than-human. I was struck by the multiple ways of documenting and its strong potentiality to disrupt dominant

theories of knowing. Another reminder about the more than 100 languages of learning that have been silenced by a curriculum whose dominant language is writing.

The role of pedagogical documentation is “necessary both to the more intimate process of ‘listening’ and making visible and challenging children’s learning-processes, and to the political aspect of making children’s meaning-making visible to the world outside the pre-schools and schools” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:10). From a posthumanist perspective the children are already part of the world, not outside of it, so adding another layer to Lenz Taguchi (2010) I propose that we should pay closer attention to the intra-active relationship “between all living organisms and the material environment: things and artefacts, spaces and places that we occupy and use in our daily practices” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:10). When referring to Haraway (2008), Lenz Taguchi (2010) speaks about a mutual becoming which Haraway (2008) refers to as becoming-with. Barad’s (2007) thoughts of intra-action is what Lenz Taguchi (2010:60) uses to offer questions about onto-epistemological understandings that does not afford knowings that “one matter or organism has made itself intelligible to another one.” What we call “pedagogical documentation” is described as an apparatus of knowing that it produces different kinds of knowledge depending on the ontological and/or epistemological perspectives we bring with us in our usage of it (Lenz Taguchi 2010:18). How then can nested encounters challenge pedagogical documentation as an active agent for the child and more-than-human in an early years classroom?

Pedagogical documentation as re-storying relations



Fig. 32 Documentation for designs and blue prints



“Meaning is not a property of individual words or groups of words but an ongoing performance of the world in its differential dance of intelligibility and unintelligibility” (Barad 2007: 149). In Figure 32. the paper, thoughts and designs are an entangled mesh that has agency in its offering of possibilities. The boy, the house and the blueprint becomes a form of documentation unfolding for other children to encounter. It is not to be measured

or described as to how or what this affords for other learning in the space but written, sketched and designed artefacts in this creation has agency as it takes up its position with others in the room. Even after the dance is complete for this little boy, the melody plays on for other dances to pick up where he finishes. Children who are intra-acting with other materials witness and connect with-out individual property. I include this QR code to bring other forms of witnessing of how this blueprint and design performs as an ongoing participator in meanings and connections. This intra-action brings

co-shapings with other humans and multiple ways of meaning. Bilaal who co-created this blue print and design moves into other entanglements in the room whilst the blueprint and design keep participating with the other children.

Barad (2007) explains that meaning is an ongoing performance in a “play or dance of different agentic bodies/matter, trying to make themselves intelligible to one another” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:63). What we as educators choose to bring forward through documentation matters. The instruments, tools, measures and apparatuses used to document the intra-actions between the human, more-than-human other and the researcher matters. Lenz Taguchi (2010) agrees with Rinaldi (2010) that “when we talk of pedagogical documentation in our everyday practices we sometimes refer to it as a tool of observation and constructing documentation from our practices” but Lenz Taguchi takes it further by offering that a “more precise definition would be to understand pedagogical documentation as a material-discursive apparatus” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:63). Resonating with Barad’s thinking, an apparatus used for observing something can be understood as taking part in a process of “material (re)configurations or discursive practices” (Barad 2007: 184) thus positioning pedagogical documentation a “an active agent in generating discursive knowledge” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:63). It plays an active role in the entanglement of human and more-than-human others as it “generates a material observation as a note, photograph, video-film, etc.” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:63).

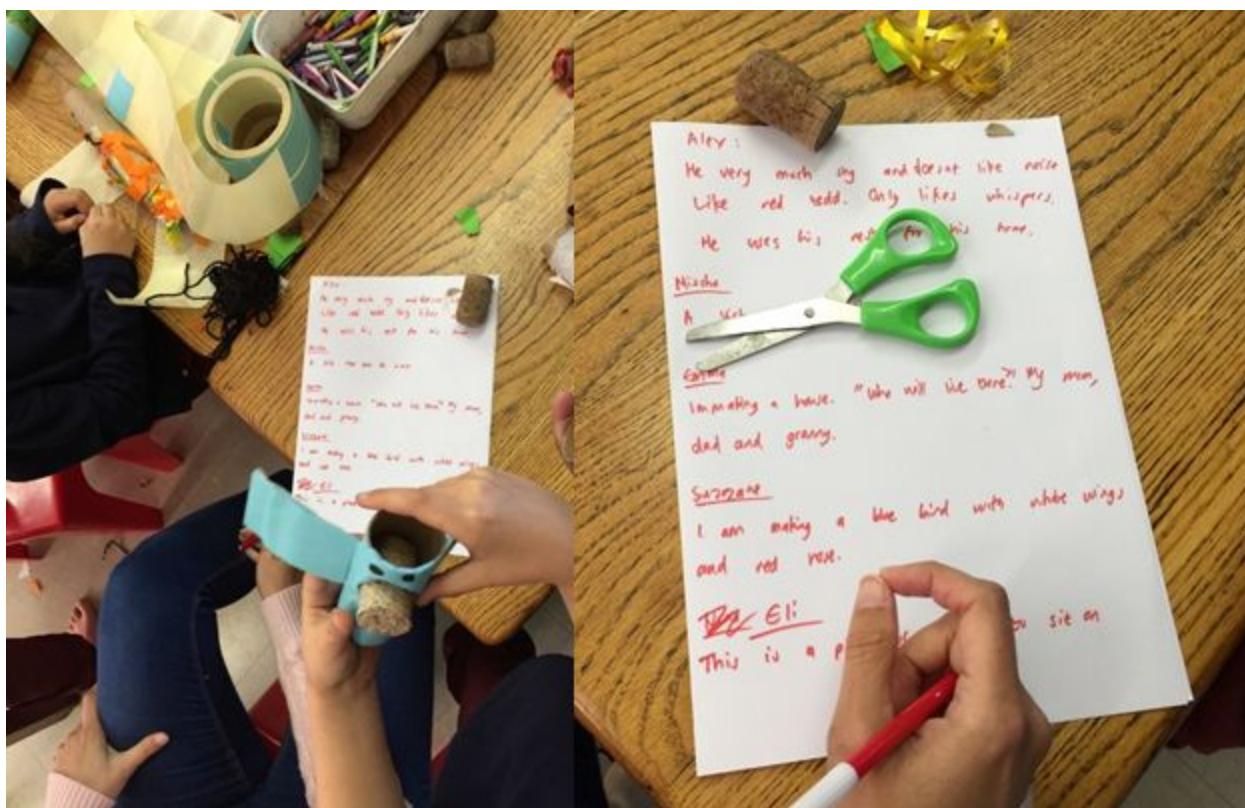


Fig. 33 Documenting as listening with words

Adrian: He very much shy and doesn't like noise like red teddy. Only likes whispers. He was his nest for his home.

Mischa: A stick that looks like a nest

Emma: I'm making a house. "Who will live there?" My mom, dad, and granny.

Suzanne: I am making a blue bird with white wings and red nose.

Eli: This is a place [unclear] to sit on

Lenz Taguchi (2010) suggests that when pedagogical practices are produced and materialised collectively by human and the more-than-human, power is produced (a 'power to', not 'power over') rather than oppressive practices. Pedagogical documentation challenges the practice of doing observation and documentation of children's individual development. Barad (2007) states that material has performative agency which means that all kinds of organisms and matter are entangled in intra-activity and meaning is an ongoing performance of different agentic bodies or matter (as in the worlding process described above). Lenz Taguchi (2010) warns that at first glance it is indeed possible to understand pedagogical documentation as a tool of observation and

a way of documenting educational practices. However, when relying on Barad's theory that the apparatus used for observing can be perceived as taking part of the process of constructing meaning (as is the case with observing electrons through a microscope), then pedagogical documentation, is "in itself an active agent in generating discursive knowledge" (Lenz Taguchi 2010:82). In other words, pedagogical documentation takes part in the meaning making whether it is in the form of a photograph, footage or written text (Lenz Taguchi 2010; Barad 2007).



Matthew: We saw a bird's nest that Mrs Morton brought us. I decided to draw a white bird in a nest because every bird needs a home. They need to be kept safe with their mother so that they don't go missing. If birds go missing in the forest then they won't know where their home is unless they have a nest. Like what if the mother is overseas but the baby is still in Cape Town.

Fig. 34 documenting as more than an illustration

As mentioned before pedagogical documentation is not for the practice of *representing* or recording a moment as-it-is. In the process of producing pedagogical documentation like sketches, recordings, photographs, artefacts or transcriptions, we must acknowledge its *matter*ing (Lenz Taguchi 2010). In Figure 34 the written documentation with the illustration created work together to make visible thoughts in more than two languages. The intra-action between the teacher listening, the child speaking, the koki writing, the thoughts entangled is a significant acknowledgement of the relationality that bring to life thoughts and ideas.

Documentation can also highlight the static nature of pictures, alternatively it can also unsettle, contest and refigure imaginaries (Braun 2002; Taylor 2013). Barad (2007:115) calls this an “agential cut” which is created in the intra-action in-between the object and the agencies of observation. When this cut is considered as a performative agent new possibilities for intra-actions with the other matter and organisms emerge (Lenz Taguchi 2010; Barad 2007). Rinaldi (2006:68) proposes that pedagogical practices can be understood as a way of “listening made visible as traces of the learning event” through written notes, photographs, sketches *etc.* Lenz Taguchi (2010:85) explains: “Without having any specific identity in itself, pedagogical documentation can be understood as a movement or force that creates a space that makes our lived pedagogical practices material”. In this way, the intra-actions between the human and more-than-human are actualised where an agential cut has occurred. Pedagogical documentation is not neutral or free from connections. The documenter, whether child, material or adult, is entangled in the process and the intra-action. Barad (2007) proposes that this intertwining is the production of knowledge and meaning. What is of utmost importance however, is that it is not a fixed matter with a fixed essence, but a substance in a process of intra-active performances and becoming – “not a thing but a doing” (Barad 2007:183). With these thoughts the documentation we get may be understood in terms of matter/material. If pedagogical documentation works in a relationship with knowledge and meaning what would it mean for the guidelines in the Life Skills curriculum?

Potential for emergence of topics is not explicitly mentioned in the Life Skills curriculum, however, it does state that the topics are a suggestion. This is an interesting discovery as many schools use the guidelines as a fixed plan. As a practitioner and researcher, I wonder about whether some of the very rigid structures in schools were actually related to the curriculum itself? How can a document which is designed explicitly using the words ‘statement’ and ‘guideline’ and ‘suggestion’ be rigid? It brings into question what causes the inflexibility in the classrooms. What if we re-think how we read the pages and content? I looked closely at some of the guidelines within the document for educators. Although I mentioned the topics and content being limited in Chapter Two, I was intrigued by what response-ability is placed on teachers for documenting and what other potentialities were possible in early years settings. Is there space to see pedagogical documentation as a practice within Life Skills CAPS curriculum?

4.1 Introduction

Assessment is a continuous planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, using various forms of assessment. It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating this evidence; recording the findings and using this information to understand and thereby assist the learner's development in order to improve the process of learning and teaching.

Assessment should be both informal (Assessment for Learning) and formal (Assessment of Learning). In both cases regular feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience.

In Life Skills, during the Foundation Phase, the emphasis in assessment is on observing learners in an ongoing and planned way, during their daily routine, structured and free play activities. This means that learners in the Foundation Phase are assessed through discussion, role-play and demonstration mainly in Creative Arts and Physical Education, whilst written recording will be more appropriate for Beginning Knowledge and Physical and Social Well-being.

Fig. 35 CAPS assessment



Fig. 36 NCF Assessment

Assessment should be both informal (Assessment for Learning) and formal (Assessment of Learning). What is quite significant for me in this paragraph is the mentioning of “feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience”.

Figure 35 is taken from the Life Skills Foundation

Phase CAPS curriculum and Figure 35 is taken from the NCF. Looking at the CAPS it surprises me that “regular feedback should be provided to the learners to enhance the learning experience” (Department of Basic Education 2011:66). The idea that teachers use assessment as a tool with the children is not common practice in South African

classrooms. As seen in both Figure 35 and Figure 36 assessment is very closely linked to observation and development of the learners which places the teachers at a distance not in a relationship of learning with the children. This approach is very different to using assessments as a tool for discovery and decisions about projecting forward. In this surveillance and observation through the use of assessment, how do we re-conceptualise a more just way of working with documentation?

Pedagogical documentation becomes what it actively does and performs in relation to the pedagogical practice where it is produced. “Pedagogical documentation, then, is a ‘tool’ for uncovering dominant discourses, social injustices, respect for diversity. Pedagogical documentation does not stop at the observation stage; rather it is always a beginning point” (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw 2008:248). How then do we re-think documentation in relation to the CAPS curriculum and dominant unethical practices?

Re-turning to the nest with CAPS through pedagogical documentation

Through re-visiting the data created over time I aimed to notice differently. Intentionally doing this means that I am aware of the possibility of looking for what I had already noticed as a co-creator of research. Haraway’s views has urged me to acknowledge the importance of not reporting events or reducing the possibilities of relationality by thinking of my role as representational. Veronica Ketchabaw’s thoughts about pedagogical narration settles my concerns about story-ing on my own. Working with the resistance, knots and contestations that are seen in the curriculum through the practice of pedagogical documentation, I suggest that it is in the troubling of documentation for observing and assessing that we keep re-figuring relationships in a Grade R classroom with the CAPS Life Skills curriculum.

The Life Skills curriculum urges teachers to adapt the “topics so that they are suitable for their school contexts” (Department of Basic Education 2011:14). Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to “choose their own topics should they judge these to be more appropriate” (Department of Basic Education 2011:14). According to Rinaldi (2010:12), “documentation fosters a conflict of ideas and argumentation, not a cosy search for consensus, it is a way to

capture subjectivities interacting in a group”. I believe that implementing this as part of teaching practice would support teachers as they navigate ethical ways to plan the next lesson, concept or move within their Life Skills planning.

The sequence and order of topics according to the Life Skills CAPS (Department of Basic Education 2011:14) document is a suggestion as “one of the important principles is to begin with what is familiar to the learner”. This suggestion, in my opinion, points towards a view that context and other influences should be taken into consideration when teachers plan. Familiar doesn’t necessarily mean known fully, it could also include the mystery or interest in an idea.

Pedagogical documentation works as a tool that transgresses boundaries in the areas of representation and practices. In so doing, it actively contributes towards making visible what has or continues to unfold in researching a project, theme or concept. This form of working with a project must not be confused with a project where the goals are pre-determined. By doing this, pedagogical documentation could work with the teacher in making the contextual realities part of the meaning-making process taking the human and more-than-human intra-actions into account. Rinaldi (2010:12) declares that “the value of subjectivity also means that the subject must take responsibility for her or his point of view; there can be no hiding behind an assumed scientific objectivity or criteria offered by experts”. Teachers who work with pedagogical documentation would be more aware of their subjectivity as they are part of the process of documenting with the children, rather than being outside of the experiences in the Life Skills lessons.

Another key focus in the Life Skills document is that teachers are “urged to pay close attention to the progression and level at which the topic is addressed” (Department of Basic Education 2011:14). When referring to attention, Haraway (2016:122) identifies the need for “new modes of attention”. Perhaps we need to reconsider the kinds of attention that we have regularly used in education and how it has influenced what or who is privileged through it. Nxumalo and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2017) add the importance of paying attention to the multi-species relations and “cultivating ways of noticing human/more-than-human interconnectedness”, which includes relationalities and the ethical implications of this form of attention. If teachers think about attention differently when documenting and planning what would be the possibilities for how

“the topic is addressed” (Department of Basic Education 2011:14).

According to Giamminuti (2016:11) “pedagogical documentation encompasses process and visible products” and it commands an “attitude of listening; democratic way of being with children; a way of making meaning and encountering each other through dialogue”. This dialogue is not the human form of spoken word but the multiple ways of connection, not only speaking or writing. Pedagogical documentation is not limited to voice recordings or written records but values materials and artefacts as forms of documentation. This important work of pedagogical documentation re-positions children and more-than-human others as active participants as they are taken seriously in and through the practice of pedagogical documentation (Rinaldi 2010; Oken-Wright 2001). This counteracts the work of observation which sits within the power of the adult in the classroom. It particularly disarms the power of the ways of ‘reporting’ that CAPS sets for teachers to measure “learner performance in a number of ways , including report cards, parents’ meetings, school visitation days, parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, letters, class or school newsletters, etc.” (Department of Basic Education 2011:67). What does this mean if we think of learning as a continuous relationship of human and more-than-human others worlding together in relationships with one another? How limiting can this methodology be for teachers when they are only looking at individual learner performance?

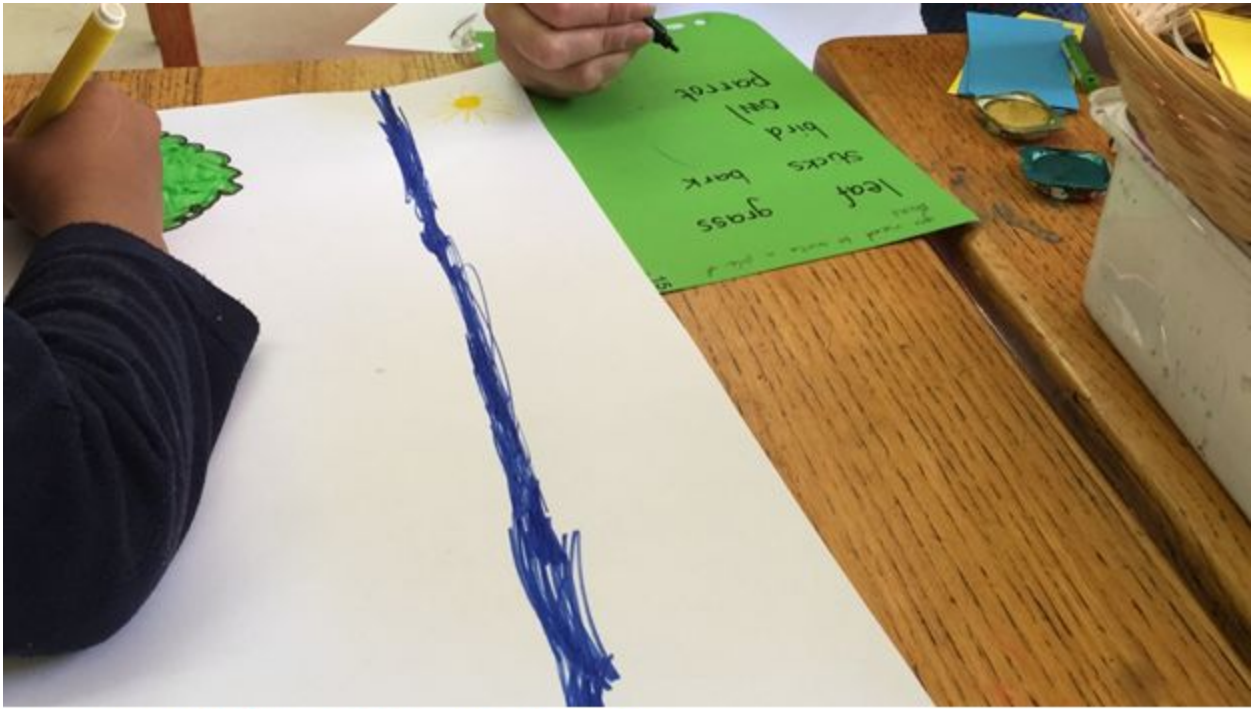


Fig. 37 Documentation as listening with words

If pedagogical documentation works towards relationality and distances itself from individuals performing (Fig. 37) what new considerations would be identified? Documenting as a form of listening with words is what I would suggest as a possible way of recording intra-actions between human beings and other beings in this worlding and becoming. The teacher, child/ren, researcher, materials are implicated in making different intra-actions visible. These intra-actions bring tensions and new response-abilities in our thinking about early years education, the position of child, the de-construction of human exceptionalism and the injustices of a curriculum.

Each mode of pedagogical documentation brings different ‘flights’, movements, and intensities (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) for the human and more-than-human assemblages of co-construction and co-participation of learning. At times, in ways that trouble me, I grapple with the awareness that as a researcher I am accountable to the complexities of noticing the multiple modes of pedagogical documentation. Artefacts, thoughts, photographs, creations and materials are all forms of pedagogical documentation used in this classroom.

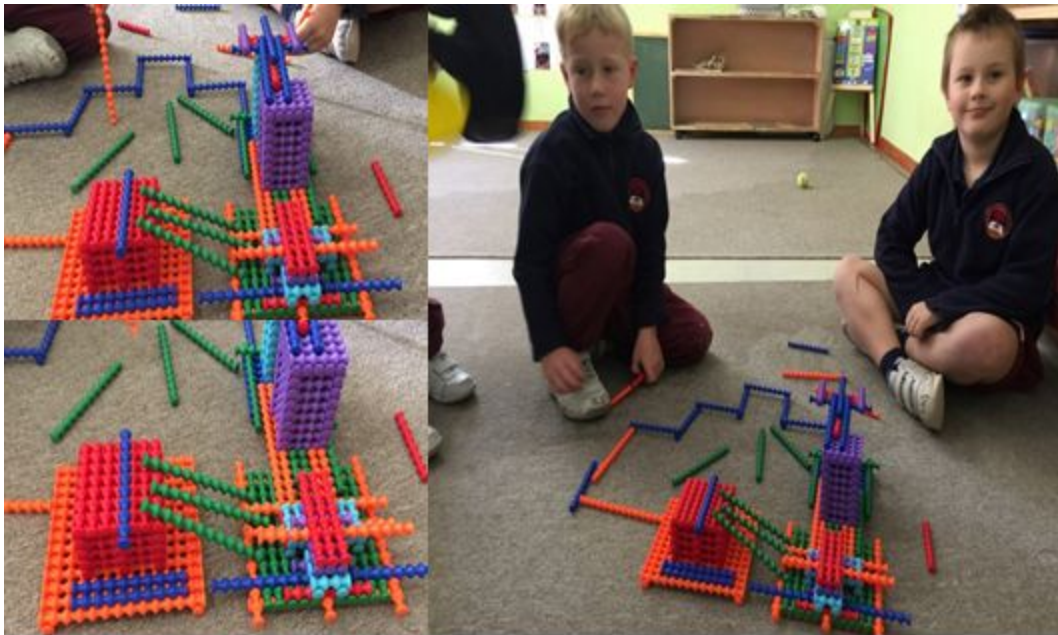


Fig. 38 denying the measures

Callum: That's my house, that's his house. This whole thing is for crocodiles. These are crocodiles. They can talk.

Joanne: The crocodiles can talk?

Callum: They're our friends.

Joanne: And where do you think the idea came from to build a crocodile's house here now?

Callum: Um, because crocodiles lay eggs.

Joanne: Ah, they lay eggs, okay!

Callum: And this is where they can lay their eggs because it's their nest and it's a tiny island, it's an island, so they can lay it on dry land.

Henry: Ja, because that's where they lay it.

Joanne: Oh, lovely.

Educators who use pedagogical documentation participate in creating a reflective practice in an early years classroom (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2006). The work of pedagogical documentation as seen in Figure 39 denies "standardised measures of quality, as in the discourse of quality" by bringing forward other ways of being with thoughts and responding to participation. Through the intra-action of toys, mat,

thoughts, words, hands, voices, descriptions and manipulation these two boys become entangled in discoveries about homes and other animals. As a co-researcher I was intrigued by their knotting and I felt the invitation to enquire more. In the transcription of the dialogue above, new knots in the making of crocodile homes, eggs and imaginations with the nest from the enquiry and outdoor worlding with the nest is revealed. New narrations and story-ing with homes not as a humanist view but an entanglement of a lively story-ing which brings to life a worlding. In other words, this documented assemblage is in opposition to the CAPS Life Skills curriculum that separates themes, human, more-than-human and seeks developmental measured outcomes. This encounter shows how pedagogical documentation affords teachers and children a response-ability for coming to their “own decisions about what is going on” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2006:144).

Now that we see how “meaning making can be construed within the notion of evaluation” how can we re-conceptualise documentation practices (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2007:ix) and more importantly our understandings about quality? I agree that documentation is implicated “within and an integral part of a democratic process of interpretation” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2007:ix) and it is our response-ability to think differently about our role as practitioners and researchers. Although this is difficult, it is a necessary struggle which Haraway (2016) calls a slow activism. When we know that newer theories of documenting, quality and learning is possible there should be a resistance to re-form another finished view of how to document with a curriculum. We have to stay with the uncertainty of the melody while we dance in an early years classroom. Everyday practices with documentation should be a continuous troubling as a quest for more just ways. Emerging new wonderings and theories are a necessary part of this becoming with human and more-than-human others in classrooms and spaces. Additionally, tentative potentialities that keep re-turning to contesting fixed notions of quality in early years settings in South Africa.

So, what then do we say when we add the notion of quality into this knottedness of relationality and more than one hundred ways of understanding a child? What re-figurations do we see patterning in a curriculum that calls teachers to ethical practices of documentation? What hope and joy can be possible in the multi-species intra-actions with a thread of pedagogical documentation and quality? How then can pedagogical documentation open spaces for the

co-construction of new knowledges and in what way is it different from current mainstream practices in South Africa?

Chapter Four

Quality in early years education

Navigating with the CAPS Life Skills curriculum and pedagogical documentation I present hopeful possibilities, in this chapter, for reimagining quality documentation without final resolutions. My intention is to offer alternatives to pedagogical practices using pedagogical documentation as a tool. The Grade R year in particular has the pressure for teachers to prove ‘school readiness’ through evidence in observation notes, assessments and reports mentioned at length in Chapter One. This practice is influenced by what looks, feels and can be described as quality documentation and leaves no room for other forms of more ethical documenting. Osgood (2015) brings into focus the comfort that is found in meeting or striving towards the demands constructed in a curriculum, assessment criteria and inspection. It is not simple or formulaic to offer an alternative but as Giugni (2011) states (as cited in Osgood, 2015), we have to “push ourselves to be, think and go beyond what we consider knowable and comfortable”. This is, I wonder, how other ways of understanding quality as fluid and contextualised would re-conceptualise further potentialities for children in early years education. What ideas would be generated about quality if we focused on entanglements of the human and more-than-human others in an assemblage with pedagogical documentation?

I am aware that in critiquing quality there should be an awareness, as noted by Deleuze and Guattari (1994:108):

To criticize is only to establish that a concept vanishes when it is thrust into a new milieu, losing some of its components, or acquiring others that transform it. But those who criticize without creating, those who are content to defend the vanished concept without being able to give it the forces it needs to return to life, are the plague of philosophy.

Foregrounded by Latour (2004), that critique in isolation can be counterproductive; Jones, Osgood, Holmes and Urban (2016a) respond to Braidotti’s (2012) view of the intimate connection between critique and creation, by proposing we push beyond a “deconstruction of

quality, where there are possibilities for an ethics of (re)affirmation.” Building on Moss’ argument, ‘quality’ is a choice and in making that choice we must take “responsibility for that choice and all that it un/does in the field of early childhood” (Jones et al. 2016a:1). Befittingly, Moss (2016:17) believes that getting “beyond quality” has proven to be an “enormously liberating choice, opening up alternatives” and newer ways to talk and think. Based on the proposal, “The age of quality is upon us” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008:87), how can we reimagine quality in an entangled relationality in early years education?

In a classroom or school in particular, performance and the assessment of quality becomes dominant in relation to meaning. The child is measured by standards and norms set up by the quality discourse which influences practice and assessment (Lenz Taguchi 2010; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2007; Murris 2016) as argued in Chapters One and Three. A thickening of the narrative that development is linear and children are seen, observed and positioned accordingly as well as human centric ideas, influence the construction of quality in education settings in South Africa. Furthermore “the discipline of developmental psychology and the discourse of quality have fitted like hand in glove” and unfairly influenced the practice of documentation in early years education (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008:106). As noted in Chapter Three, record sheets, assessment scores, observations and other forms of documenting are in place for the measurement “of what kind and quality of learning has been achieved” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:62). Continuing with this thinking, adding CAPS Life Skills curriculum to the discussion, we can see how dominant ways of understanding what counts as quality can have significant oppressive patterns in schools. Pedagogical documentation as a tool brings an alternative as it projects learning forward rather than in relation to pre-determined considerations as quality outcomes.

The concept of quality is not neutral as it is a socially constructed concept with definitive meaning/s (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008:94). The construction of quality is influenced by history, political agendas, cultural understandings and customs, personal experiences and preferences, as well as emotions, our senses and other things that may at first appear unrelated (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2007). Tesar (2015:103) agrees that the notion of quality is political and unfairly influences schooling based on measures of quality that privileges performances within a curriculum framework and narrow views of knowledge. Pence and Moss (2007: 5)

argue that “[q]uality child care is, to a large extent, in the eye of the beholder” and at the very same time as it is not only in the eye of the beholder, it also cannot be separated from theories, intra-actions and ideas about education. I would argue that the beholders is a curriculum formulated by adults, political influences, discourse and theoretical underpinnings of what quality education is.

The early childhood field according to Power and Somerville (2015:72) “can be characterized as a cultural contact zone” and quality is one of the multiple storylines which manifests in early childhood learning spaces. The storyline of quality creates a “surveillance and regulation” within



Fig. 39 Multiple qualities

the fences of schools. What is considered quality is often human-centered or measured by humanist views and theories that quality education can be reduced to a universal definition applied across all contexts.

Massumi (1993: 10) states that a concept like quality has as “many meanings as there are forces capable of seizing it”. He goes on to say that the “technique of representing the unrepresentable” is grounded in the belief that the “quality of an image” does not reside in the image alone but also “in the complete context of its production, circulation and conditions of consumption” (Massumi 1993:181). I suggest that this complexifies theories about quality and it’s disrupts its singular frame. Quality being measured by observation, surveillance, assessment and measurement is brought into question if it

is seen and experienced in relation to its production.

What would be gained for early childhood settings if we emphasised multiplicities of quality? In Figure 40, nest and eggs materialised through connected thoughts, intra-actions and words in multiple ways. Words like mom written by the child, eggs made with materials, a basket participating as a nest, leaves and narratives recorded on the top of one page. My emphasis is on witnessing the more-than-human intra-actions that pushes the enclosures of learning being measured and observed by an adult or pre-determined by a curriculum. I take up the response-ability and stay with the trouble of quality benefitting from “diverse orientations and critiques” that open up possibilities which limited perspectives do not provide (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw 2008:242).



I include a QR code which captures multiple intra-actions and encounters. As a modest witness I am bold in my intent on unsettling unmediated truths about what counts as quality. I am aware of my participation and the interruptions that are made when noticing more than what the child is doing. I am struck by how through this QR code pedagogical documentation and moments in the classroom which are not “passive representations of educational quality” are brought forward (Nxumalo 2016:3; Rinaldi 2010; Barad 2003). I am unsettled by the practices of making children’s thinking visible as a measured outcome which excludes relationality and ignores what other pedagogical narratives are present. In the documenting of school readiness the child becomes the singular focus of what is important or quality in education. The human centredness of the criteria as mentioned in Chapter One becomes central to the teachers documenting process.

Quality in South African curriculum

According to Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, the national curriculum was built on the values that inspired the constitution (Department of Basic Education 2011). Motshekga (2011) points out that “[e]ducation and the curriculum have an important role to play in realising these aims” in the CAPS Life Skills curriculum document. This is one of the aims with regards to quality mentioned in the CAPS curriculum: “quality and efficiency: providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries”. In the context of the reconfiguration of child as part of the world, how then can we consider the CAPS curriculum with pedagogical documentation to provide new ways of understanding collaborative co-construction? How can we re-think understandings of what is considered quality?

Loris Malaguzzi (1969) suggests that, like all human sciences, pedagogy has to be remade, reconstructed and updated based on the new conditions of the times or it loses its nature and function. This statement propels us as educators to keep considering our practice, philosophy and ideas about quality within the education system. Likewise, when we critically examine what we consider quality it has a direct impact on practice. Educators should “make themselves much more aware of, as well as find ways to make use of, the complexities, differences and diversities of the material-discursive contexts we inhabit” (Lenz Taguchi 2010:50). Pedagogical documentation would work with teachers to implement and consider these ways of engaging topics. It becomes problematic for authentic learning to take place if concepts and knowledge are covered rather than open to new knowledges and understandings. If teachers are able to take note of the patterns, interests and ideas during Life Skills, Beginning Knowledge lessons, it would create space for a more democratic next move, rather than a teacher led narrative. Through pedagogical practices teachers could be more deliberate about taking other perspectives into account when considering what concept or theme to consider next (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2008).

Two primary study areas of the Life Skills CAPS curriculum are Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Well-being. In Chapter Three, I focused on how pedagogical documentation can contribute towards the process of learning with the guidelines of teaching in these two focus

areas. With pedagogical documentation practices what counts as knowledge is disrupted and calls us to look more closely at the relationality of the human and more-than-human. Through this way of working with curriculum, child, human and more-than-human we complicate the notion of what counts as quality (Nxumalo 2016). I am drawn towards the possibilities that the CAPS Life Skills curriculum with pedagogical documentation can bring a re-framing of multi-species relationality as an alternative focus and in so doing add new considerations for what counts as quality in the early years.

Re-conceptualise-ing Quality

Jones, Osgood, Holmes and Urban (2016a:7) agree that we are not on a quest to “get it right” instead we are questioning so to “make the familiar strange, and to work within metanarratives and discursive frameworks” which have in the past and still in the present acted in “unhelpful and potentially harmful ways.” According to Burgh and Yorshansky (2011:437) and Murriss (2016), deliberation is an essential part of the process of co-constructions that “determines the quality of the decision-making processes”. In an early years classroom, making the familiar strange through the process of deliberation is possible through pedagogical documentation. I believe that with the distribution of power in pedagogical documentation, cross-species respect is essential to prevent ontoepistemic injustice. Pedagogical documentation acts as an agent for multiple possibilities for what counts as quality and opens more as it takes away human/curriculum/child centred practices.



Fig. 40 Many teachers

Teachers are the adults in the room in South African schools. Teachers are also positioned as the experts and abide by the structures in the schooling system. These two statements create even more injustice when referring to quality. It places pressure on teachers to perform in certain ways in a classroom and places them in a position of power over the children, furniture, decisions and participation. In Figure 40 the familiar is made strange in presenting many teachers. Teachers be-coming with one another, furniture, materials, thoughts, theories, child and ideas. Intra-actions that make visible qualities of learning that present a marvelling for me as a re-searcher. Through pedagogical documentation and its intra-active nature, an unfolding of more marvelling with 100 and 100 more languages became part of the time spent in these classrooms. Making homes together, thinking with materials and narratives about nests and homes, the children new ideas, messiness occurred. How then through

pedagogical documentation, practices and re-conceptualising quality education do we acknowledge the familiar made strange? I put to work as a figure of a modest witness encounters that complicate the notion of quality education. In many classrooms participation is measured by hands being raised, answers being given to teacher designed questions, completed tasks and delivering expected outcomes. Children are expected to perform according to timelines of task completion before moving on to the next planned task. In this participation with the children as a co-researcher I feel response-able for witnessing what is happening in this room. No adults except myself and entanglements of sound, interests, wonderings and marveling revealed in multi-layered becomings with more-than-human others, children and myself. I argue that re-conceptualising quality is possible through this enabling encounter of teachings.

Re-conceptualising what might constitute quality in the South African education system is to understand that ‘quality’ is taken for granted as “some thing - objective, real, knowable waiting ‘out there’ to be discovered and measured by experts” (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 2013:6). ‘Quality’, therefore, is neither neutral nor self-evident, but saturated with values and assumptions. It is a constructed concept. This can lead to quality being translated as fact and produces a judgement of value. If so, what does this mean for knowledges and classroom settings? I see the destruction as early childhood practitioners make judgements, understand and evaluate in relation to the wider questions of what is believed to be markers for children to adhere to. These judgements are often concretised by written notes, assessments, observations and reports which makes documentation complicit in the unjust positioning of children.



Fig. 41 Beyond quality

Lenz Taguchi (2010:45) points out that when documentation is used to “determine the positioning of the learner in relation to her development in learning specific content or ability”, the learning is considered an *object*. The destruction of positioning the children in relation to content and objectifying learning erases new productions of knowledge and learning. If knowledge is understood to be already constructed and based on the idea of reproducing knowledge and skills we deny other forms of becomings. In Figure 41 a gesturing open hand, an assemblage present at the table from previous intra-actions between materials and children and a sense of new creations keeps the pursuit and momentum for witnessing different narrations in motion. According to Jones, Rossholt, Anastasiou and Holmes (2016b), “quality/qualities could be about experimenting with how ‘things’, including figures and more-than-human entities, are co-constituted, inhabiting a chaotic and relational assemblage of forces, bodies, smells, chairs and discourses taking on new significations.” Although what is framed within in Figure 41 is limited it has sufficient force as a form pedagogical documentation that further resists simplifying quality and experiments with the complexities of quality.

According to Foucault (1980:216):

Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are... The political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try and liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us.

Although Foucault's theories look at the human, I am interested in how considering Foucault's thoughts with regards to new forms of subjectivity we can rethink the individuality that has been imposed upon children in the South African schooling system. An example of this is simply looking at the concepts covered in the Life Skills curriculum in Figure 43 and its moralistic, human-centred and separated structure. Colebrook (2006:48) explains Deleuze's (1987) argument for multiplicity of becomings as "not a being that becomes for any movement or becoming to alter or connect with another" which complements the theories of relationality mentioned in previous chapters. Highlighting contradictions in the curriculum presents more urgency for alternative forms of pedagogical practice. In this case, the worksheet in the DBE book for Grade R becomes problematic as it presents a humanist view and limited understandings of more-than-human others.

Topic: Wild animals - 2 hours

- What is a wild animal?
- Types of wild animals
- Where we find wild animals
- How wild animals live

Topic: Finding out about one wild animal - 2 hours

- Choose one wild animal to study
 - What the animal looks like
 - Where it lives
 - What it eats
 - Babies and where they are born
 - An additional interesting fact

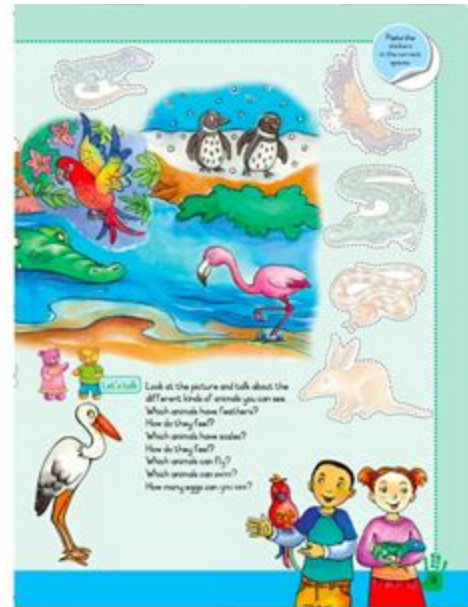


Fig. 42 Life Skills limitations

In Figure 42 the curriculum outline for Term 4 shows a topic of Wild animals and Finding out about one wild animal. In both cases a prescribed two hours per week should be spent on each respective topic. The curriculum with its design and intention to produce a quality education in relation to “global standards” places a time on exploring knowledges (Department of Basic Education 2011). How has the concept of quality worked to oppress other worldings? The worksheet from the DBE book poses even more concerning imagery in the selection of animals. If this is the manual for teachers to work from, I believe the practice of pedagogical documentation will open up more ethical ways of co-production of knowledges and relatings. It would allow for teachers to be less influenced by the limited and oppressive questions to measure quality teaching about wild animals. A collective enquiry about wild animals not from a humanist view but one that includes a worlding of human and more-than-human assemblages and discoveries.

Through pedagogical documentation from nested encounters, educators, children, material and concepts intersect to re-shape knots. Challenging quality, pedagogical documentation keeps troubling conventional patterns and practice. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Taylor (2015) see links between pedagogical documentation and Carr’s (2001) learning stories as they both work with

reflective narration. Pedagogical documentation and learning stories collectively pay attention to individual and collective reflection simultaneously and help plan future learning activities. Through the documenting of encounters and hypotheses, new motions of knottedness and connectedness are revealed for further learning. In what way can documentation within the CAPS curriculum become more just in its pursuit of ethical considerations using pedagogical documentation?



Fig. 43 Reconceptualising quality

As I pointed out earlier erasures occur in our limitations of quality. Jones, Rossholt, Anastasiou and Holmes (2016b) contest “quality as a series of detectable, visible and measurable interactions and practices that lead to a child making linear, developmental progress through a trajectory of norms and age/stage-related expectations” and argues for a reconceptualisation of quality that proposes a

reconceptualisation as a process of becoming. Figure 43 dynamically puts to work a “commotion of relational activity” through the countless and immeasurable intra-actions, co-creations and lively encounters between the human and more-than-human (Manning and Massumi, 2014: 12). I am drawn into this rhythmic force of multiple pedagogical narrations and storying which is not contained or available for assessment. I put forward only a few suggestions, the box as a nest for the girl, a listening with an eye gaze between the child and teacher, a gathering of hypothesis and legs at a table as forms of affective forms of quality reconceptualised.

In this closing chapter I have encountered our implicated and hopeful complications as co-researchers, co-authors, children, teachers and more-than-human others in our pursuit of reconceptualising quality. I propose with Barad (2007), Haraway (1997), Leibowitz and Bozalek (2018), Murris (2016), Nxumalo (2016), Taylor (2012) a necessary deconstruction of the pedagogical narrative of quality in education. I argue for an on-going, knotted, emergent, always in motion practice of quality. An explicit move towards pedagogy as “predicated on a relational ontology, where individual people and entities do not pre-exist relationships, but come into being through relationships” (Leibowitz and Bozalek 2018:4). These pedagogical narrations of relationality are made more hopeful through pedagogical documentation as it brings a rhythm of relationality between the human and more-than-human others. A constant and consistent messiness for teachers to work with when planning, documenting and considering how to proceed *with* the materials, the child, and the more-than-human as ontoepistemic agents in the learning process.

Staying with the trouble

Following the promptings of Haraway (2008), who urges us to stay with the trouble and to keep grappling with the sticky knots, I have sought to resist the goal of reaching resolutions in this study. In doing so, and through inhabiting the contact zones of early childhood discourses, this research project has unearthed uncertainties about familiar practices in early childhood spaces in South Africa. By denying the conventional image of child, alternative considerations which highlight the need to take our role as researchers seriously, are presented. Positioning myself as a co-author of this research has helped to unsettle dominant framings of quality practices, furthermore, putting to work Haraway's figure of the modest witness as a way of storying everyday encounters in an early years setting. This is a call to think of quality as materialised in more-than-human becomings. This rich exploration of descriptive, visual, and textual accounts called for responses to the complex practices with a clear resistance for reconciliation. I remain hopeful for the intersectional possibilities and re-imaginings for quality that avoids final resolutions.

This research project has offered an opportunity to revise what we think we know about children and early years education in South Africa (Lenz Taguchi 2010). That children are positioned "as simple, concrete, immature thinkers who need age-appropriated interventions in order to mature into autonomous 'fully-human' beings" is a case and point of the ontoepistemic injustice in early years education (Murriss & Muller 2018:152). From a posthuman perspective, teachers and researchers are "attentive to, and responsive/responsible to the specificity of material entanglements in their agential becoming" (Barad 2007:91). In relating to children as co-constructors of knowledge and co-researchers within the field of early childhood education, we make way for a multitude of ongoing relatings for present and future learning. Doing justice to this is ongoing. We cannot distance ourselves from the complexities of how schools work because we ourselves as South African researchers and teachers are already entangled in the legacies of the past, present and future becomings. This is in accordance with Barad's findings which identifies that it is impossible to isolate or separate practices of being (ontology) and knowing (epistemology) as they are "mutually implicated" (Barad 2007:185). This

understanding of a relational ontology unsettles the “separateness of being, knowing and responding” (Murris & Muller 2018:155).

The implications for reimagining classroom spaces affects the multiple understandings, practices and patterns for education. It is necessary to consider the everyday mundane encounters as well as bigger and more complex perspectives. In moments of enquiry, during a lesson on the mat, lesson planning, materials used for learning, we have to pay attention to the learning stories that unfold (Carr 2000; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. 2015). Within more complex and political narratives, as in the power asserted over relationships through the curriculum, image of the child and policy, there is an urgency for critical engagement. This is not an exercise in de-romanticising or sentimentalizing early childhood education so that we might find restoration. Our role is to resist conventional forms of practice, teaching and learning and to acknowledge that through critical commentary we avail ourselves to the sticky contact zones and troubled spaces that we are a part of (Haraway 2016). The unequal spaces, imperfect worlds, colonised traditions are what “children inherit and co-inhabit along with other human and more-than-human entities” (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor 2015). Through these theories and ideas, slow and steady generative moves for more ethical learning spaces is made possible with pedagogical documentation.

The rhythmic and revolutionary pattern that emerges when considering pedagogical documentation has revealed problematic and unjust structures of how teachers work with the expectations of the CAPS Life Skills curriculum. Instead, pedagogical documentation acts as a ‘tool’ for uncovering dominant discourses, social injustices and respect for diversity. Pedagogical documentation does not stop at the observation stage; instead it is always actively working as a beginning point. It puts forward questions about “which discourses we have embodied and produced, and what voice, rights and position the child has got in institutions” (Dahlberg et al. 2008:153). Bringing forward lesser considered narratives in early years education, the unresolved questions embody post-humanist sympathies. By knotting the theory and practice in ways that go beyond the subjective, we reveal complexities of an entanglement that shifts conceptual understandings of quality. I believe that the political potentialities for South Africa is in our awareness and sensitivity of our pedagogical practices, the possibility of

change through newer constructions, where alternative narrations and discourses can produce newer practices (Dahlberg et al. 2008). This must start with re-conceptualising quality, which would emphasise the need for critical engagement not only in classrooms but educational policies, higher education spaces and the decolonisation of knowledge. Pedagogical documentation will thereby serve as a revolutionary tool that will help us deconstruct dominant discourses and bring forward more ethical considerations of relationality. This is desperately needed in the South African decoloniality discourses currently. An openness to multiple interpretations, multi-species and multiple relatings raise a continuous discovery of unresolved questions. Whose quality is conceptualised in early years education in South Africa? Similarly, this highlights the importance of critical engagement on quality in higher education spaces, as well as a call for future research and policy development in broader education spaces. I contest the idea that the change begins in schools, by bringing a sharp focus on the necessary work in higher education and teacher training in particular. What would be generated for early childhood education if intersectionally existed between schools and higher education?

As with other critical early childhood scholars (Dahlberg & Moss 2013; Lenz Taguchi 2014; Murris 2016; Ohlsson 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw 2010; Taylor 2013), the contribution of this study moves us towards more ethical and just ways of working with constructions of quality in relation to early years education. I explicitly set out to see potential connections for pedagogical documentation and the CAPS Life Skills curriculum. As a co-researcher, I have become acutely aware of my positionality in this discourse and of how I have shifted as a direct result of be-coming entangled in this work. At the outset, my focus was on the image of the child, but the exposure to humanist discourses challenged my philosophy of education. Many tracings, disturbances, fissures and historical relatings have revealed itself in the materiality, writing and data created through this project. I witness the decomposing and re-composing of many interruptions and impositions for early childhood theory and practice. In a rhizomatic way, newer intensities and flows took me to unexpected places. I embrace of the uncertainty at the start of my writing, the newer thoughts and the always in motion thoughts of justice within the contact zone of early years education in South Africa. I find a place of temporality in concluding.

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